INTRODUCTION OF MEDIGAP PORTABILITY REFORM LEGISLATION

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker. Over the course of the last 2 years, we have spent a great deal of time in Congress debating the future of Medicare. The debate between my colleagues from both sides of the aisle has been sharply partisan and at times bitter. It is my hope that we can move past the rhetoric and begin to work on legislation which will improve the health care coverage of seniors in our country. I am happy to say that the legislation we are introducing today accomplishes these goals.

I am proud to join Congresswoman JOHNSON and Senators CHAFEE and ROCKEFELLER in introducing this legislation. Our targeted Medigap bill will provide the same guarantees of portability and pre-existing condition protections to seniors enrolled in Medigap, achieved in the health insurance portability and accountability law. This very important legislation will improve the health care coverage of America's seniors. This legislation embodies a policy I have always supported to ensure that seniors can get continuous coverage for their Medigap policies. With this legislation, seniors will be able to explore options such as managed care, secure in the knowledge that they can return to Medicare as they know it. Seniors are now free to try new health managed care options without being permanently locked into potentially costly out-of-pocket expenses from which they were previously protected by their Medigap policies.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in passing this legislation and I commend Congresswoman JOHNSON and Senators CHAFEE and ROCKEFELLER for their work on this issue.

''MARKETS HELP U.S. SPACE COMPETITIVENESS''

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, January 6, the Orlando-based Florida Today newspaper printed an interesting article about the growing competition within the United States to launch commercial satellites into space. In particular, the article reports on the new Long Beach, CA-based Sea Launch Co.

This new Boeing-led consortium will transport rockets out to a floating launch platform in the Pacific southeast of Hawaii, where they can be launched more efficiently from the equator. Last year I attended the groundbreaking of Sea Launch's facilities in Long Beach along with several other colleagues, and can report that their initiative is most impressive.

But the focus of the article is on how the Sea Launch effort poses a competitive threat to the older Cape Canaveral Air Station, where the Air Force's 45th Space Wing operates the eastern range and several part-Government, part-commercial launch facilities. In particular, the question of why Boeing would create a project to launch satellites elsewhere than Florida—or the new California and planned Alaska commercial spaceports—is raised.

And the not-too-surprising answer comes from the House's own DAVE WELDON, the distinguished Representative of Florida's space coast region: Since many observers agree that Government-managed launches have too much redtape and extra expense, the Air Force needs to step back from the day-to-day operations. My colleague was exactly on point, and courageous for saying so, albeit politely.

Let me be more blunt. The fact is that we've been launching satellites on expendable rockets for nearly 40 years. The high costs of space lift today are a result of throwing away the rocket as we launch it, and the huge bureaucracy we've put in place to run the launches.

We're already making significant investments in new technology with the NASA X–33 program to move toward fully reusable, single-stage-to-orbit rockets. But it's just as important that we bring the efficiencies of competitive free enterprise to bear on such well-understood activities as space launch. Which means we have to decrease the Government's involvement.

Besides, the Air Force should be investing its limited resources in applying technologies such as those resulting from X–33 and the prior DC–X program to realize new capabilities like military spaceplanes, which could revolutionize warfighting and force structure requirements.

In other words, if the Air Force can transfer the mundane function of space cargo transportation to the private sector, the Air Force can on space warfighting, becoming the ''Space and Air Force'' described in its new vision statement, Global Engagement.

In summary, I strongly support the gentleman from Florida, Mr. WELDON, in his statements, and commend the entire article to my colleagues.

[From Florida Today, Jan. 6, 1997]

SPACE COAST HAS NEW CHALLENGER AS LAUNCHES HEAD OUT TO SEA

(By Robyn Suriano)

CAPE CANAVERAL.—Far away, in the cold shipyards of Scotland and Norway, work is under way on a project that gives local space advocates the shivers.

The object of their worry is a floating launch platform longer than a football field that will be used to send rockets and their satellites into space from sea.

The Boeing Co.-led international venture, called the Sea Launch Co., is the first of its kind and more than a novel way to get payloads into orbit.

It could be a serious threat to Cape Canaveral Air Station, where U.S. companies are fighting to keep their share of the world's commercial launch business.

''What worries me is Boeing finding it more attractive to go through all the complexities of a sea launch operation as opposed to using the existing launch pads that we have here at Cape Canaveral,'' said Ed O'Connor, executive director of Florida Spaceport Authority, the Cocoa Beach-based organization trying to increase the state's commercial space business.

''There is a message in that, and that message concerns me more than anything.''

The new company was formed in April 1995 when Boeing, the Russian space agency and private companies in Norway and the Ukraine joined hands.

Although military rockets have been launched from ships since the late 1940s, Sea Launch is the first attempt to move commercial space missions off land.

What makes the venture potentially attractive to companies)—and such a threat to the Cape—is that it will be the only launch site to be directly on the equator.

That's critical because most communication satellites must be placed into equatorial orbits to do their jobs.

By launching from that spot, satellite manufacturers could get an added benefit not found at the Cape, where rockets take off 30 degrees north of the equator.

A trajectory from the Cape requires the rockets to use more fuel to get their payload into the right orbit. Because they have to carry extra fuel to get in place, the rockets can't carry larger satellites.

Officials hope the sea launch plan will allow rockets to carry larger satellites into orbit at less cost, making more money for the companies involved.

''The shortest distance to that orbit (for communications satellites) is from the equator because it's straight up,'' Sea Launch President Ron Olson said. ''Therefore, at that shortest distance you can put a bigger satellite into space.''

If all goes according to plan, the first rocket should take off from the sea platform in June 1998 carrying a Hughes Communications satellite.

Another 14 launches—all using Ukrainian-made Zenit rockets—follow. Ten of those also will carry Hughes Communications satellites.

Sea Launch plans to run the operation from corporate offices in Long Beach, Calif.

From the California coast, the company's ship will set sail carrying the Zenit rockets in its hull while its upper decks serve as luxurious quarters for business executives.

The ship, currently under construction in Scotland, will need eight to 10 days to sail to a point southeast of Hawaii—smack on the equator.

There, it will meet a floating launch pad that has its own engines and can move under its own power. The mobile pad is a former oil drilling platform undergoing renovation at a Norwegian shipyard.

For the first few launches, the rockets will be transferred from the ship to the floating pad while the two are docked together in port, then set sail simultaneously for the equator.

But Sea Launch eventually wants to leave the launch pad at sea for several months, using the ship to carry satellite-laden rockets to the site, where they will be transferred to the platform by cranes.

The Zenit rockets then would be launched from the pad using an automated system that will reduce the number of people needed to get the rockets ready, said Olson.

''The infrastructure that's required for launching at sea is about half of what you see at the Cape,'' Olson said. ''We just won't have a lot of people running around like they do at the base.

''So therefore, the operating costs are considerably less than what other people have to offer.''

Olson declined to discuss Sea Launch prices, saying only the company follows trade agreements made by the U.S. government. In doing so, Sea Launch cannot cut its prices any more than 15 percent below launches by other U.S. companies from the Cape.

A Hughes official, Barry Fagan, said the Sea Launch concept is attractive for many reasons—including price—but mainly because the demand for launches is growing fast.

Seventeen Lockheed Martin Atlas and McDonnell Douglas Delta rockets were

launched from the Cape in 1996, keeping Space Coast pads full for the year.

Fagan said the site simply can't support all the launches in upcoming years as more satellites are put into orbit to supply mobile phones, direct-to-home television and other communications services.

''The biggest (factor) is the overall need for more capacity,'' said Fagan, launch services acquisition manager for Hughes. ''If you look at Atlas and Delta and the Cape in general, there's just more demand than they can satisfy.''

However, with the advantages of Sea Launch also comes risks, including the company's use of an untested three-stage Zenit rocket.

Although a two-stage Zenit rocket has been used for years, the three-stage design that Boeing will use for Sea Launch never has flown. The new rocket will not have any test flights before its first liftoff.

Nonetheless, officials from Hughes and Sea Launch say the rocket is not that big a risk.

''There are no real stretches technologically,'' Fagan said. ''We're talking about all proven pieces. The real challenge is just fitting all the pieces together and making sure the system works as a whole.''

''It's one of the latest developed rockets available, and we think it's the best,'' Olson added.

Fagan and other Hughes officials are so confident Sea Launch will work that they are calling on U.S. companies to consider building their own mobile launch platform for equatorial liftoffs.

''It may be something that's too new and too different, but if Sea Launch proves the concept, and I think they will, then the government and U.S. space industry might want to take a look at this,'' Fagan said.

One Cape customer—McDonnell Douglas—already is considering taking its business south and launching its rockets from a site 5 degrees north of the equator run by the European Space Agency in South America.

Such a move would be devastating to the Brevard County economy, space officials say.

Each launch of a Delta and Atlas mission infuses about $10 million into the local economy from salaries and money spent on services needed to get the rocket ready, according to Florida Spaceport Authority.

But rather than focusing on an elaborate sea operation, it may be more realistic for Space Coast officials to look for ways to make the Cape more attractive to commercial customers.

For example, the Air Force may need to step back from its day-to-day role in overseeing the Cape's launch pads, said U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon, R-Palm Bay.

The Air Force runs the Eastern Range, the tracking system that monitors all rocket and shuttle launches from the Cape. Some observers say the government-run launches are encumbered by too much red tape and extra expense.

While the military is taking steps to make the Cape more competitive, more must be done, Weldon said.

''We're probably going to have to pick up the pace in the next few years as the competition gets more intense,'' Weldon said. ''Especially as it relates to updating the range and redefining Air Force involvement as the operations become increasingly commercial.

''We need to bring the Air Force more and more out of daily operations if we're going to bring down the costs.''

No matter what happens at the Cape, however, Sea Launch officials say the Florida launch site is not going to be hurt by their mobile platform—at least not now.

''There's enough business for everyone, there's just not enough launchers right now to take care of it all,'' Olson said.

Said Fagan: ''The good news is that there's room for everybody. If the Cape were to modernize and streamline, I think they're going to maintain a significant portion of the market.''

Sea Launch Co. at a glance:

Companies: Joint venture between Boening, Russian space agency, and private companies in Norway and the Ukraine.

Launch site: Floating launch pad longer than a football field that will stationed along the equator near Hawaii.

Rockets: Ukranian Zenit rockets will be used to launch satellites in orbit.

First launch: Scheduled for June 1998. Fourteen other launches also are booked.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TEAMWORK FOR EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS (TEAM) ACT

HON. HARRIS W. FAWELL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, today, I am joining with a bipartisan group of my colleagues to introduce the Teamwork for Employees and Managers [TEAM] Act. The legislation is designed to remove roadblocks in current law to workplace cooperation and increased employee involvement, while not undermining the ability of workers to choose union representation. My colleagues and I have come to the inescapable conclusion that today global competition demands that American workers and their employers work together. The Federal Government should not stand in the way of employees playing a meaningful role in addressing workplace issues. As we join to introduce the TEAM Act, it is our fervent hope that Members on both sides of the aisle will begin a dialog to develop a proposal that will provide the flexibility for employers and employees in nonunion workplaces to resolve workplace issues together, while continuing to protect and secure the rights of workers to choose union representation.

As the Congress considered the TEAM Act in the 104th Congress, it became clear to me that labor-management cooperation and employee involvement techniques are a means of structurally organizing a workplace that can empower employees with a broad sweep of decision-making authority both about production and worklife issues. I was struck by the testimony received by the Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations, which I chair, from employees of both Texas Instruments and FMC Corp. where they expressed how important employee involvement was to their job satisfaction. The clearest message I took from their testimony was that a return to the old way of doing business—in the words of one TI employee, a return to ''just work, don't think''—was unfathomable. My concern is that our labor law has not evolved with the changes in the workplace and, unfortunately, it is presenting just such a roadblock to employee involvement.

As I look at the modern workplace, I see a system of labor law that recognizes two extreme versions of workplace organization. The first is the top-down management of yesteryear—''just work, don't think''—where the employer holds all the cards and closely guards decision-making authority. We all recognize that in today's workplaces, where job responsibilities are overlapping and interconnecting, a continuation of this form of management will place U.S. business at a competitive disadvantage. The other form of workplace organization that our labor law contemplates is the independently selected union as the exclusive bargaining representative of employees. My sense is that the TEAM Act deals with a hybrid form of workplace organization that may not have been considered when our labor law was written many decades ago. Employee involvement is bottom-up management which recognizes that the interests of labor and management are less often mutually exclusive than the reverse.

The TEAM Act attempts to clarify that employers and employees in nonunion workplaces may establish structures to address matters of mutual interest. I believe that the safe harbor created in the bill for employee involvement and cooperative labor-management efforts recognizes that these are forms of workplace organization that can serve as well both employers and employees, while specifically acknowledging that these structures should not, and cannot, interfere with the right of employees to select a representative of their own choosing who will serve as their exclusive bargaining representative.

Admittedly, in the last Congress, we were not successful in convincing the President that this was the case, and, unfortunately, to the detriment of both employees and employers, the bill was vetoed. Again, though, I reiterate our commitment to the enactment of legislation that will provide employers and employees in nonunion workplaces with the flexibility to resolve workplace issue together, while protecting the right of all workers to representation by a union should that be their choice. My colleagues and I will work with all Members who have an interest in achieving this goal.

I realize that it has become a cliche, but both managers and employees have convinced me that employee involvement is a win-win proposition. Investing employees with decision-making authority with regard to the most integral aspects of a plant's operations gives them ownership and a sense of control over their worklife. Employee involvement also drives management toward the recognition that is human resources are its most valuable asset as the input of employees with regard to the production process has positive impacts on the bottom line. The TEAM Act is good for workers, good for businesses, and good for the American economy. I urge your support.

HONORING JOHN J. BUCKLEY

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 6, 1997

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, thousands of residents of Lawrence, MA, will pay a final tribute to the man who was known there as ''Mr. Mayor'' until the day he died—Mayor John J. Buckley. John J. Buckley served as mayor for 22 years, spanning three decades from the 1950's to the 1980's. During that time, he won the respect and friendship of President John F. Kennedy and countless other public figures who came in contact with this man who called himself ''a mayor for all the people.''