they directly participate in the decision. Even then, defendants could not be required to pay punitive damages unless they showed a willful and wanton disregard for the rights or safety of the patients.

Another concern about our bill was whether it would affect the ability of health plans to maintain uniformity in different States. Some of the businesses that have business in many different States were concerned about this. Our new draft only subjects plans to State law when they make medical decisions that result in harm. So it does not affect the ability of a business to offer a uniform benefits package and be outside of State law as it relates to that benefits package.

This discussion draft that we have will allow Republican Senators who have voted against the Norwood-Dingell-Ganske bill to vote for a real patient protection bill. I sincerely hope that they take that opportunity. It would make a tremendously positive difference for our country. Mr. Speaker, to be quite frank, it probably would help the HMO industry too, because all of these cartoons and jokes that we hear about are not a good thing for that industry. But if we had a fair process in place so that if one has a dispute with one's HMO, one would have a fair process to get that taken care of, and one would know that at the end of the day, if one did not agree with the company, we would have an independent panel to review it where the decision would be binding on the company.

I say to my colleagues, that would not increase lawsuits, that would decrease lawsuits. That would help prevent injuries or deaths from happening. I honestly think that that would be beneficial to the industry itself, because boy, they have got a real problem that in my opinion some of them really deserve.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am coming to an end here. I think that there are some ways where some common sense could help with the prescription drug problem, not just for senior citizens, but for everyone in terms of helping bring down the cost of prescription drugs. I think as we look at in the next week or so ways to help with some reimbursement issues for Medicare, we should be very careful about rewarding HMOs who, in many cases, are ripping off the system; and we should focus those dollars on the real areas that need to be fixed.

Finally, we have about 3 weeks, by my estimate, left here in Congress to get something done. The way it stands right now, if the Republican Senators who have voted for the Norwood-Dingell-Ganske bill, Senators MCCAIN, FITZGERALD, CHAFEE, and SPECTER, will stick to their past votes, they have already voted twice for real patient protection, if those Republican Senators will stick with their past votes, then if all of the Senators show up and we vote on that again, we have a 50–50 tie and Vice President GORE comes in and breaks the tie, and we will have signed into law a real Patients' Bill of Rights.

However, we have an alternative. The alternative is to look at this compromise language, to get some additional Republican support for this compromise language. We can add some important aspects of access to health care to that, some areas of real compromise with the Democrats, whether it is in the area of 100 percent deductibility for the self-employed or some additional tax credits for small businesses that offer health insurance, or even in the context of an overall agreement, maybe even an extension of medical savings accounts.

Mr. Speaker, there is a desire to get this done. That is why we have come up with this new compromise language. We do not want to put Republican Members of the Senate in a box and ask them to change their vote. That is why our compromise solution is there, so that they can come on board to a good piece of legislation, we can get this signed into law, and then we can go back to our voters in November and say, we have overcome a $100 million effort by a special interest group to keep the special protection that no other American business has. We are doing something in a truly bipartisan fashion so that our citizens back home in their time of need, when they really need to have their health insurance work for them, health insurance that they have spent a lot of money on, when they really need it, it will be there, and they can have confidence in being treated fairly.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what this is about. It is a big opportunity. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take it.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

Mr. DREIER (during special order of Mr. GANSKE), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106–882) on the resolution (H. Res. 586) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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HOUR OF MEETING ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2000

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY of Texas). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STRICKLAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. UNDERWOOD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FOLEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GOSS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CANADY of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PICKERING, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, September 22, 2000, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

10188. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Department of Agriculture, Agricultral Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, transmitting the Department's final rule—Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida; Limiting the Volume of Small Red Seedless