

and the people of Kansas is nothing short of remarkable. Ruth Ann Komarek has just completed her 30th year of working for me. That is three, zero, Mr. President.

A native of Ellinwood, KS, Ruth Ann came to my office from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1965, while I was still serving in the House of Representatives. She made the transition with me to the Senate in 1968, and she has been hard at work ever since.

Ruth Ann serves as my office manager and supervisor of my mail operation, a mammoth task to say the least. Virtually every letter, fax, postcard, and package that comes into my office passes through her hands. That represents thousands upon thousands of pieces of correspondence every week. She gets each one where it needs to go and tries to make sure that every Kansan who writes to me gets a timely response.

Ruth Ann also spends a lot of time keeping the rest of the staff—especially the interns—in line. New staffers learn that her gruff exterior hides a heart of gold and a great sense of humor, but after she has laid down the law and made them earn their way.

I am proud to recognize Ruth Ann Komarek for all her hard work for me, the Senate, and for Kansas. I look forward to her continued service in the coming years.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to commend my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator JUDD GREGG, for the Medicare Improvement and Choice Care Provision Act which he introduced last week.

The Medicare Program has received a great deal of attention in the last year, particularly since early April when the Medicare trustees report stated that the Medicare Program will become insolvent in just 7 years.

Mr. President, Senator GREGG and all Republicans took this report very seriously. But, as anyone who has worked on this issue knows, to ensure the solvency of this program is going to require a great deal of commitment on the part of Congress and the administration.

Our goal is very simple—to preserve, strengthen, and protect the Medicare Program. Today 37 million disabled and elderly Americans rely on Medicare for their health care. For their sake and for the millions of Americans who will rely on this program in the future, we need to take action.

And that is exactly what Senator GREGG has done. The bill that he has introduced not only preserves and protects the current Medicare Program, it also strengthens the program to move it successfully into the 21st century.

Mr. President, as I have said many times in this Chamber, the United States has the best health care system in the world. There is no other nation that compares to the quality of care delivered by our providers, our technology, and our innovation. Although Medicare has provided invaluable

health care services to millions and millions of Americans, in some areas it has not kept pace with many of the advances in health care delivery enjoyed by the private sector.

The bill introduced by Senator GREGG restructures Medicare so that its beneficiaries receive the same range of choices and possibilities that those with private insurance receive today. At the same time, it leaves traditional Medicare completely in place for those Medicare beneficiaries who are happy with the care and services they receive today.

Mr. President, Senator GREGG deserves a great deal of credit for the leadership he has demonstrated on this very complex issue. As Congress is about to begin a very serious debate on Medicare reform in the coming weeks, the work of Senator GREGG will no doubt be an invaluable benefit.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business, extended, is now closed.

#### AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of the order, the hour of 10 o'clock having arrived and passed, the Senate will now proceed to consideration of H.R. 1976, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1976) making appropriations for agriculture, rural development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with amendments; as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italic.)

H.R. 1976

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, namely:

#### TITLE I

##### AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

##### PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, AND MARKETING

##### OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

##### (INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, and not to exceed \$75,000 for employment under 5 U.S.C. 3109, **[\$10,227,000]** *\$12,801,000*, of which **[\$7,500,000]** *\$10,000,000*, to remain available until expended,

shall be available for InfoShare: *Provided*, That not to exceed \$11,000 of this amount, along with any unobligated balances of representation funds in the Foreign Agricultural Service shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Secretary.

#### EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

##### CHIEF ECONOMIST

For necessary expenses of the Chief Economist, including economic analysis, risk assessment, cost benefit analysis, and the functions of the World Agricultural Outlook Board, as authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1622g), and including employment pursuant to the second sentence of the section 706(a) of the Organic Act of 1944 (7 U.S.C. 2225), of which not to exceed \$5,000 is for employment under 5 U.S.C. 3109, **[\$3,948,000]** *\$3,814,000*.

##### NATIONAL APPEALS DIVISION

For necessary expenses of the National Appeals Division, including employment pursuant to the second sentence of section 706(a) of the Organic Act of 1944 (7 U.S.C. 2225), of which not to exceed \$25,000 is for employment under 5 U.S.C. 3109, **[\$11,846,000]**.

##### OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS

For necessary expenses of the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, including employment pursuant to the second sentence of section 706(a) of the Organic Act of 1944 (7 U.S.C. 2225), of which not to exceed \$5,000 is for employment under 5 U.S.C. 3109, **[\$5,899,000]**.

##### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, including employment pursuant to the second sentence of section 706(a) of the Organic Act of 1944 (7 U.S.C. 2225), of which not to exceed \$10,000 is for employment under 5 U.S.C. 3109, **[\$4,133,000]** *Provided*, That the Chief Financial Officer shall reinstate and market cross-servicing activities of the National Finance Center: *Provided further*, That none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act shall be used to obtain, modify, re-engineer, license, operate, implement, or expand commercial off-the-shelf financial management software systems or existing commercial off-the-shelf system financial management contracts, beyond general ledger systems and accounting support software, at the National Finance Center until thirty legislative days after the Secretary of Agriculture submits to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations a complete and thorough cost-benefit analysis and a certification by the Secretary of Agriculture that this analysis provides a detailed and accurate cost-benefit analysis comparison between obtaining or expanding commercial off-the-shelf software systems and conducting identical or comparable software systems acquisitions, re-engineering, or modifications in-house.

##### OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

For necessary salaries and expenses of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration to carry out the programs funded in this Act, **[\$596,000]**.

##### AGRICULTURE BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES AND RENTAL PAYMENTS

##### (INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For payment of space rental and related costs pursuant to Public Law 92-313, including authorities pursuant to the 1984 delegation of authority from the Administrator of General Services to the Department of Agriculture under 40 U.S.C. 486, for programs and activities of the Department which are included in this Act, **[\$110,187,000]**, of which