

Eliminating the concern about reprisals by insurance companies will facilitate more effective use of genetic tests as they are developed and, therefore, promote cures and treatments. This will sustain the global leadership of the biomedical research industry in the United States.

However, if you can lose your health insurance because your genes show that some day you might require that insurance, clinical trials will become impossible to conduct and new treatments and cures may not be developed. Consequently, it is important to have this protection, which will ultimately lead to improved health care for all Americans.

Congress is moving rapidly now on legislation to reform the American health insurance system. It is likely that a bill could pass the House this month and the Senate next month. A conference agreement between the House and Senate could put the bill on the President's desk well before this Congress adjourns. The House bill is H.R. 3070, the Health Coverage Availability and Affordability Act of 1996. Sponsored by Congressman MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, this measure is a well-thought-out piece of legislation, and I am proud to be a cosponsor.

The bill prohibits denying insurance coverage to an employee or beneficiary on the basis of health status, which is defined as an individual's "medical condition, claims experience, receipt of health care, medical history, evidence of insurability, or disability." Fortunately, I was able to add two simple words to this list under health status—"genetic information." As medical science discovers what secrets our genes carry, the potential misuse of that information, whether through insurance or some other venue, becomes an ever-increasing possibility.

It is imperative that the strongest possible statutory protections exist against applying this information toward genetic discrimination. In the future, these discoveries of genetic information could lead to employment discrimination. That is why we need to conduct hearings on my bill and to pass the rest of this important legislation. Discoveries of genetic information could be the civil rights battle of the next century.

These two words make a good piece of legislation better, and I hope this language remains in the final health care bill. It is vital to ensure that all Americans, like those two little boys in California, do not have to go without health insurance because of a misspelling in a genetic script that they could not control and did not choose.

Mr. Speaker, I might point out that similar efforts have been made in some 20 States, including Florida, and they have either enacted or are studying laws that would limit the use of genetic information by insurance companies. According to the Council for Responsible Genetics, a nonprofit group that monitors social issues in bio-

technology, a genetic underclass is being created by employers and insurers who use genetic tests to deny coverage or jobs.

THE 78TH INCREASE IN NATIONAL DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, day after tomorrow, on Thursday, this Congress is expected to pass its 78th increase in the debt ceiling of this country. Seventy-seven times, so far, we have increased the debt ceiling since the 1940's. We are now at \$4.9 trillion of debt. A lot of people in this country, Mr. Speaker, do not really think that they are responsible for this excessive debt. What has happened in the last 40 years is Congress has lost control of spending.

Under section 1 of the Constitution, Congress is responsible for the purse strings. Congress is also responsible for how deep this country goes in debt. We have not only lost control of spending, but we have also lost control of how deep we go in debt, because in the last 7 months we have seen Secretary Rubin and the President of the United States find a new way to drive us deeper in debt without the consent of Congress. That way, of course, was raiding the trust funds that we have in this country.

Day after tomorrow, we are considering tying yet another diminishing of congressional power and tying that to the debt ceiling increase. That is the Presidential line-item veto, and I just want to mention that before I talk about this chart, the Presidential line-item veto.

I served under three Governors in the State of Michigan. In Michigan we have a line-item veto. In every case with every Governor, they traded what they wanted because they had the power of vetoing out what the legislature wanted in particular spending. You know, philosophically, when you have got a liberal Congress and a conservative President, then a line item veto might make sense in terms of trying to reduce spending. But actually what is going to happen with a conservative Congress that is trying to get to a balanced budget and reduce spending and a President that has found it to his political advantage to continue helping people with taxpayers' money; in other words, not reducing spending, not achieving a balanced budget; is that we end up spending more. We end up giving additional congressional authority away to the President.

Let me note, Mr. Speaker, this pie chart that represents the roughly \$1.6 trillion expenditure of the Federal Government. If we start with the red triangle on this pie chart that represents about 18 percent of total Federal spending, that represents the 12

appropriation bills where Congress has control of the spending. In other words, if there is no bill passed by Congress, or if it is not signed by the President, then that reduced spending or no spending is what is going to happen.

Where the President has power is in the blue part of this pie chart that represents the welfare program spending and the other entitlement spending of this country. That represents now 50 percent of total Federal Government spending. So that there were some of us that thought it was reasonable to tie changes in the entitlement spending that is going to help us achieve a balanced budget, to tie that to yet another increase in the debt ceiling.

That now is not the plan in the bill that is going to be put before this body day after tomorrow, and I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the American people, that we cannot balance the budget just by reducing the expenditures in the 12 appropriation bills where Congress now has full control. It just cannot be done.

I have studied this over the past several years. You cannot reduce that expenditure below about \$200 billion this next year. It cannot possibly be done and still have a viable operation and system within this country.

That means that, if we are going to balance the budget, we have got to move into the welfare changes in the welfare program and entitlement programs. They are called entitlement programs, Mr. Speaker, because if you are at a certain level of poverty, you are eligible for food stamps. If you are a certain level of income and you have children, you are eligible for AFDC. If you are a certain age, you are entitled to other taxpayer helps in paying your medical costs. There is no money appropriated. It is in the law.

The only way that a majority in Congress can change that law is the consent of the President. I would ask my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to study the proposal that we are being asked to pass day after tomorrow very carefully. It continues to move us in a direction where we are not going to be able to balance the budget.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House will stand in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. UPTON] at 2 p.m.