

INADEQUATE MSA DEPOSITS TRANSFER LARGE COSTS TO MODERATE-INCOME EMPLOYEES

Low- and middle-income employees are likely to face high out-of-pocket costs under the high-deductible insurance plans with MSAs because the MSA contributions made by their employers are likely to fall short of the annual deductible amounts under those insurance plans. In fact, employers are unlikely to be able to afford to deposit the full deductible amount. Consider the following. A company may currently offer its employees family coverage under a conventional insurance policy and pay an annual premium of \$5,200 for that coverage. If the company switches to offering a high-deductible plan with an MSA, the annual premium for the high-deductible insurance policy would be approximately \$3,900. These costs assume the insurance plans are comparable except that the conventional coverage includes a \$200 deductible while the high-deductible plan has a \$3,000 deductible. Because the company's annual premiums savings from switching to the high-deductible insurance plan is only \$1,300 per family (\$5,200 minus \$3,900), the company is highly unlikely to be willing to deposit \$3,000—the full amount of the deductible—into the employee's MSA. In addition, employers are likely to keep some of the difference as a cost-saving benefit to the company. Thus low- and middle-income employees likely would have significantly less than half of their annual deductible amount—and most likely no more than one-third of the deductible—deposited into MSAs by their employers and thereby available to meet ongoing health care costs.

Moreover, nothing in this bill requires employers to make any deposits to MSAs as a condition of offering high-deductible insurance. Once small- and medium-sized employers shift to offering only high-deductible insurance and no longer offer conventional insurance or managed care plans, they would be free to reduce or eliminate contributions to the MSAs at any time. If that occurred, the low- and moderate-income employees of those companies would be left to finance the entire deductible amounts out of their own pockets. Although the low- and moderate-income employees could make deposits on their own to an MSA, they would receive little or no tax advantage from using MSAs—because they either do not pay income taxes or pay taxes at much lower rates than the higher-income taxpayers who would be the primary beneficiaries of this MSA legislation.

In short, if low- and moderate-income taxpayers use MSAs in substantial proportions, it will likely be because they have little alternative. And the use of the MSAs with high-deductible health insurance plans is likely both to increase their risk of incurring unaffordable health care costs and reduce their ability to afford adequate levels of health care services for themselves and their families.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to bring to your attention a special constituent of mine, Kurt Martin, of Bardwell, KY. Kurt is a senior at Carlisle County High School and has been named a national winner in the 1996 Voice of Democracy Program. Kurt is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Martin of Bardwell.

The Voice of Democracy Program is an annual broadcast script writing scholarship contest. Kurt's winning script entitled "Answering America's Call" is an inspiration for all Americans. I would ask that Kurt's entire remarks be printed in the RECORD at this point.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

(By Kurt Martin)

I raced down the stairs trying to find my shoes as Dad impatiently honked the horn of the van outside. As I tied my shoes at record speed, the phone rang. Out of breath, I answered the phone soon realizing I was in a conversation with a military recruiter for the Marines. Great! I'm late for church, I don't have any idea what songs I'm going to play for the song service, and now I have to stand and make small talk with a military recruiter.

"So, what do you plan to do after high school?" he asked rather abruptly.

"Well, I'm planning to go to college," I answered as politely as I could, trying to end the conversation quickly.

"Have you ever thought about going to the Marines to gain money for college?" he asked.

"To tell the truth, I have considered serving in the military, but I hurt my knee. I'm going to have to have surgery in a few weeks."

"Well, that pretty much counts you out of any military action. I'm sorry about your injury, and I hope your knee gets better. Best of luck to you in the future."

During church, my mind wandered to the conversation I just had with the Marine recruiter. I has always known that the military was strict about health regulations; but since my knee injury, the subject of serving in the military had never come up. I somehow couldn't come to grips with the idea of not being able to serve my country because of a basketball injury. How can anyone, especially a man, answer America's call when he can't serve in the military? I had read about my kind in history books. If there is another war, the "real men" will go risk their lives for our country, while I sit at home selling war bonds.

After pondering the subject for a few minutes, I began to realize exactly what "America's Call" is. Even though I may not be able to serve in the military because of my injury, my dedication to my country should not end there. Franklin Roosevelt didn't let a physical handicap keep him from helping his country recover from a major depression.

The confidence of the American people in his leadership ability during World War II got him reelected three times, even though he was confined to a wheelchair.

As a student, I can answer America's call each and every day by preparing myself for the future as I apply myself to my studies. I don't know yet what type of career I will be training for, but whatever it may be, hard work will enable me to make a difference in my profession, my country, and my world. The work ethic that enabled Abraham Lincoln to rise out of poverty to become President will allow our generation to preserve the reputation America has maintained for so long.

Another way to answer America's call is by upholding Christian morals and ethics. When I abstain from premarital sex, drugs, and alcohol I not only take a stand against those vices, but I also become a positive influence on my peers. When I fight against violence and corruption, I stand alongside the founding fathers of our country by trying to make America a better place to live.

America may call me to become involved in activities that benefit my neighbors, community, or country. If I volunteer to work at

the local nursing home or roadblock for a telethon supporting disabled children, I answer America's call by showing that I care about those who are in need. When I vote for local, state, and national candidates I show that I am concerned about the future leaders of our country.

I can also heed America's call by supporting those who serve or have served in the military. Those men and women deserve all of my support, honor, respect, and appreciation. They need to know that all Americans are striving to keep the freedom that they risked their lives for. This goal will be achieved if we resolve to do as John F. Kennedy advised in his inaugural address, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Only then can we truly "Answer America's Call."

HONORING THE WEST SIDE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the West Side Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in firefighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee Fire Training School in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

GRANTING MOST-FAVORED-NATION TRADE STATUS TO ROMANIA

HON. BILL RICHARDSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to give their wholehearted support to the legislation offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CRANE] which would grant permanent most-favored-nation [MFN] trade status to Romania. As I am sure you are aware, Romania has been granted MFN for the past 3 years, but it is subject to periodic renewal. It is now time to bring an end to this

renewal process and make Romania's MFN status permanent.

Romania meets all the criteria for permanent MFN: unhindered emigration; a free market economic system; a multiparty democratic political system with free and fair elections, and respect for basic human rights and freedoms. As a nation still in transition after the 1989 revolution, Romania is still working to institutionalize these changes. But I have no doubt about the commitment of the Government and people of Romania to staying on the course of full integration into the Western community of nations. Romania is a founding member of the World Trade Organization, and has strongly expressed its desire for membership in such Western institutions as the EU and NATO. The granting of permanent MFN is regarded by foreign governments as a manifestation of U.S. support. It represents our acknowledgment that a nation has expressed strong commitment to the values that we hold dear. In a case such as Romania, it also signals our encouragement and support for the reforms that are still being made and the progress yet to come.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my colleagues will agree that Romania is deserving of this support and acknowledgment. Since granting permanent MFN to Romania will not affect the United States budget, this legislation is literally a cost-free way for us to express to the people and Government of Romania our admiration for what they have accomplished in 6 short years, our encouragement for their efforts to continue on the path they have chosen, and our hope for a better future for their children.

TRIBUTE TO STANLEY AND GWEN  
MCCRACKEN

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise before you today to pay tribute to two great Americans, Stanley and Gwen McCracken. In recognition of their exemplary service as the DAV and DAV Auxiliary State commanders of the great State of Michigan, their many friends and colleagues will join in honoring them during a Joint Testimonial Dinner to be held at DAV Chapter 129 Memorial Home, located in Utica, MI on Friday, April 26, 1996.

Commander McCracken is a veteran of both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force, serving both services with honor and distinction. He enlisted in the Army in 1958, serving as an infantryman. In 1963, Stanley decided to reenlist in the Air Force. He was assigned to the Strategic Air Command, Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico. His tour of duty included and encompassed many responsibilities, including being attached to the 42nd Bomber Wing, Combat Support Group. While at Ramey, he was assigned to a Recovery Team, as well as being an integral member of a ground crew, and finally assuming the duties of crew chief aboard a B-52 bomber.

Stanley McCracken earned the stripes of staff sergeant along with numerous decorations and awards for his outstanding military service before he was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1967.

Commander McCracken has been elected to, and successfully held every chapter level office, including chapter commander for two terms. He has also been an active member of the St. Clair County, MI, Allied Veterans Council for several years, in addition to being a member of DAV Chapter 51. Mr. McCracken accumulated extensive experience before assuming the State commander's job. He was an elected member of the State Administrative Board for 4 years before he was picked by the membership as a department line officer. He ultimately progressed his way through the various chairs, of the department, and was elected as State commander of the DAV in June 1995.

Equal in service to the DAV, Mrs. Gwen McCracken was elected to serve as commander of the Disabled Americans Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, in June 1995. Gwen McCracken has a long, outstanding record of service to her community. She has been a driving force in a number of organizations that are committed to improving the quality of life for those who are less fortunate. Mrs. McCracken was instrumental in helping to found Volunteers Assisting the Disabled, an organization that provides summer camp opportunities to adult MDA patients, who would otherwise, simply because of their age, be exempted from participating in camp.

Gwen McCracken is a life member of the Corporal Ian M. Gray Unit 51. She has been an extremely active member of the DAVA, eagerly accepting the duties and responsibilities of the many positions and offices of the organization that she has held including; state chaplain, senior page, first vice commander, and senior vice commander.

The McCrackens, through their collective energy, enthusiasm, and zeal, have stood like sentinels on behalf of not only disabled veterans, but on behalf of all veterans and their families. Their many years of combined service have helped to preserve and protect the promise that was made to care for those who have borne the battle, their widows, and their children.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I stand before you today asking that you and my fellow Members of the 104th Congress join me in honoring Stanley and Gwen McCracken. They have spent their lives in dedicated service to their country and community. I am pleased to have this opportunity to join with their family, friends, and colleagues to extend my deepest thanks for their tireless efforts on behalf of Michigan veterans.

TRIBUTE TO REV. CHARLES L.  
MOORE

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, the Reverend Charles L. Moore, at the age of 86, is the oldest active priest in the 19 county greater Cincinnati archdiocese. During his religious career, he has served as a parish priest, high school teacher, jail chaplain, mission administrator, church pastor, district moderator of the National Catholic Community Services, archdiocesan director of the Catholic Information Services, and military service counselor in World War II in Florida.

Father Moore has spent the last 16 years serving the parishioners at the Holy Family Parish in Middletown, OH, the students at Fenwick High School, and John XXIII Elementary School.

June 6, 1996 will be the 60th anniversary of Father Moore's ordination into the priesthood. I want to congratulate Father Moore on his years of service and dedication to helping the people of Southwestern Ohio.

A LEGACY OF LENIENCY

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton loves to talk up his record on crime, but the facts are the facts. The best antidrug legislation and the best law enforcement are useless if judges are not willing to uphold the law. When judges such as the ones the President has appointed show more sympathy for the people they prosecute, than for victims, the heroic efforts of the police and the law are muted.

The American people deserve the best qualified judges that reflect their priorities and values. It does not serve America well when a judicial nominee to one of the highest courts in the land does not possess even rudimentary knowledge of constitutional law—even if he is a golfing buddy of the President. If the President and Washington special interests get their way, we will get a judge trainee. This venerable position requires experience and extensive knowledge of the law. The nominee, Charles Stark possesses neither. He even testified before Congress that he could make up for his ignorance of landmark court decisions and constitutional law by taking some courses or asking other judges for help.

Mr. Speaker, this is no way to run a railroad. Most Americans will agree that we do not need a judge who needs on-the-job training. We need judges who will protect the rights of crime victims, not invent new, more expansive rights for criminals. We need judges who will follow through with the tough-on-crime measures my Republican colleagues and I have passed. But, perhaps more importantly, we need a President who will nominate such individuals.

JOSEPH S. FRANCIS: FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE TO SAN DIEGO

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Joseph S. Francis, executive secretary-treasurer of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, who will be honored with a Distinguished Service Award by the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council on April 27, 1996.

After four terms and 16 years of exemplary service, Joe Francis is stepping down from his leadership position with the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, whose affiliates number 103 local unions representing approximately 108,000 members. His strong leadership, vast experience, and organizing skills