

THE CARE ACT

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, in a cruel display of corporate greed, the Pabst Brewing Company last year announced its intention to renege on its promise to provide health and death benefits to its retirees. Following a court battle, Pabst appears to have succeeded: retirees and their families have lost benefits that were promised them in exchange for many years of loyal service to the company.

This outrage demonstrates a lack of corporate responsibility to dedicated former employees. This is not an isolated incident, but part of a disturbing nationwide trend. Over the past several years, thousands of workers and retirees across this country have faced similar cancellations and reductions of their health coverage. John Morel, Hormel, and General Motors are just a few of the corporations who have tried to leave their former workers stranded without health care—health care they were promised, and health care their long years of service earned. From meatpackers to clerical staff, this is a threat to the retirement security of all American workers.

We must act now. Last Congress, I introduced a bill which I am reintroducing today, the Health Care Assurance for Retired Employees Act—or the CARE Act—which would protect retiree health benefits and help retirees to obtain health insurance if their coverage is canceled.

The CARE Act would require employers to give 6 months notice to retirees and require the Labor Department to certify that the changes meet the requirements of the collective bargaining agreement.

It would also expand retirees' access to health care under COBRA for those aged 55 to 65 until they are eligible for Medicare.

Lastly, it would allow retirees who did not sign up for Medicare or Medigap to apply for the programs without late-enrollment penalties.

This type of atrocity must not be tolerated. We must ensure retiree security and prevent loyal former workers from being left out in the cold. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to show their support for retired workers and their families by cosponsoring this bill.

BALANCED BUDGET REQUIREMENT ACT OF 1997

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, today, along with our colleague Representative KAY GRANGER of Texas, I have introduced the Balanced Budget Requirement Act, legislation to require the President to submit to the Congress each year a balanced Federal budget and to forbid the consideration in the Congress of any budget resolution that does not provide for a balanced budget. These changes would take effect immediately, and are essential in implementing any Constitutional amendment to balance the Federal budget.

Specifically, the legislation provides that:

Beginning in fiscal year 1998, the President is required to submit a plan for achieving a balanced budget by 2002. Thereafter, the President must submit budgets to maintain a balanced budget for the current fiscal year and the 4 fiscal years following, unless there is a declared war or national security or economic emergency.

Upon submission of the President's budget, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) determines whether the plan achieves a balanced budget and certifies to the Chairman of the House and Senate Committees on the Budget such. If the budget is certified as not being in balance, the Chairmen of the Budget Committees notify the President in writing within 7 calendar days. Within 15 days, the President may submit a revised plan to achieve a balanced budget.

It is not in order in the House or Senate to consider any concurrent resolution on the budget that does not achieve a balanced budget by fiscal year 2002. In 2002 and thereafter, it is not in order to consider any budget resolution that does not maintain a balanced budget. This section cannot be waived unless a joint resolution is enacted that declares war, a national security or national economic emergency.

Finally, the bill makes in order in both the House and Senate the consideration of the President's budget or revision as a substantive amendment to the budget resolution, without substantive amendment.

While essential, enactment of a balanced budget in the Congress and ratification of a balanced budget constitutional amendment is only the beginning, not the end. The Balanced Budget Requirement Act, together with diligence on our part, will keep the Federal budget balanced.

MARKING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, in the days immediately following the adjournment of the 104th Congress, the members of the Faith Community Christian Church of Wyckoff, NJ celebrated the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of their church. I ask my Colleagues to join me in extending their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes.

Formally established on October 1, 1896 in the Riverside neighborhood of Paterson, the congregation was originally known as the Fourth Christian Reformed Church. For nearly eight decades, the church members worshipped in Paterson. On April 5, 1975, the church structure was destroyed by a fire that claimed the life of a Paterson firefighter.

Clearly, a church such as this does not survive on structure alone. The community relocated to its current site in Wyckoff and assumed the name Faith Community Christian Reformed Church in September 1978.

Mr. Speaker, this church has remained steadfast to its Christian mission throughout its distinguished history. Perseverance and courage have been the watchwords of the con-

gregation since its founding, but especially in the trying days following the 1975 tragedy.

Faith Community Christian Reformed Church has been a pillar of the northwest Bergen County community and is widely respected. The ministry that the church provides to the community is clear evidence of the "faith of our fathers living still." Indeed, the church is following the traditions of the Christian faith of the founding fathers of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this nation's history, faithful communities such as this church have formed the backbone of our society. At a time when many Americans are deeply concerned about the cultural and moral erosion of civil society, this church provides a center of worship and a solid foundation of faith for our families, our children and our communities. Just as this nation is a better place because of these churches, the dedicated service of the Faith Community Christian Reformed Church has enriched quality of life in Bergen and Passaic counties. Its contributions are adding to the rich tapestry of American life in northern New Jersey every day and deserve to be recognized as a part of the permanent historical record of our Nation through the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

My Colleagues, I invite you to join me in honoring the members of the Faith Community Christian Reformed Church on one hundred years of faithful service and extending best wishes for another century of service.

MEDICARE DIABETES EDUCATION AND SUPPLIES AMENDMENTS OF 1997

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add my name as an original cosponsor of the Medicare Diabetes Education and Supplies Amendments of 1997, introduced today by my colleague from Oregon, Representative FURSE. This long-overdue legislation will assist millions of diabetics, by ensuring that the relatively small costs of diabetes self-management training and glucose test strips will be covered by Medicare. The cost-effectiveness of managing diabetes has been well documented. Management significantly reduces and delays the onset of disabling or fatal consequences of this disease. Thus, the small investment Medicare makes "up front" pays off several times in savings over the long term. But most importantly, these simple, cost-effective techniques notably improve the quality of life for people with diabetes.

Many of my colleagues will recall Representative FURSE's valiant attempts to enact this legislation in the 104th Congress. Throughout that Congress, in the context of Medicare legislation and budget reconciliation, even to the last night of the second session, she worked to achieve that goal. I was glad to work with her in that effort. However, despite tremendous support from people with diabetes and their families, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, and the White House, the elusive prize was not to be won in that most rancorous of seasons. I hope that as we begin this quest again, we can place health policy ahead of partisan wrangling, and people