

cost of employer-based plans were not frequently used by school-age children. By including these benefits, the program has enabled families to gain a greater peace of mind with little effect on the program costs. Other state programs have attempted to control claims costs by reducing coverage for pre-existing conditions, inpatient, mental health, and transplant services or by raising copayments or deductibles. The Florida program has found that these additional health benefits can be included with little impact on the premium when a thoughtful package with reasonable, affordable copayments is crafted. In fact, with 5 years of use pattern supporting data, the Florida program has been able to negotiate three premium reductions.

Florida has found that children with insurance are more likely to have a health care home and therefore receive care before an illness becomes serious, reducing overall health care costs by one fourth. Preventive care is crucial to the overall well-being and development of a child. Recent studies have shown that for every \$1 spent on immunizations such as measles, mumps, and rubella, \$21 is saved in health care and related costs.

A child's health has a direct impact on their performance in school. Children who attend school while sick are not mentally or physically prepared to meet the challenges of learning. This becomes much worse for a child who cannot afford to see a doctor and suffers through a disease until it gets better on its own, or until an illness becomes too serious for home-based treatments. This results in less productivity in the classroom and more days absent from school for the child. In fact, the average school-age child misses 4 days of school a year due to illness. And uninsured children are 25 percent more likely to miss school than those who have insurance.

Independent studies of the Florida program have shown that the program is not only beneficial to the children, but to the community as well. Florida hospitals report a 30-percent drop in pediatric charity care. Emergency room visits have been shown to decline by 70 percent. Program savings like this have saved Florida \$13,125,000 in health care costs in just one year.

The first pilot project for Florida Healthy Kids was launched with the assistance of a demonstration grant authorized by Congress in 1989 and administered by the Health Care Financing Administration [HCFA]. This crucial experiment may never have moved from the drawing board without Federal interest and assistance. This bill would recognize the full potential that was originally hoped for by Congress for this tremendously successful program.

It's just that simple.

I welcome cosponsors for the bill, and comments and suggestions from the public on ways to improve the bill.

The following is a summary of the bill:

SCHOOL-BASED CHILDREN'S HEALTH
INSURANCE ACT OF 1997

SUMMARY

I. School-based Health Insurance Program

A qualified school-based program is operated by a local or state public school system or any public or private non profit organization operating a private school. Qualified school-based health insurance coverage is coverage that: Is offered by a qualified school-based program; is available to all

children under 19 years of age; provides a comprehensive benefit package; has at least a \$1,000,000 lifetime benefit; has no cost-sharing for covered preventive care; does not impose any pre-existing condition exclusions; charges premiums that are consistent with the premium section of this bill; and does not discriminate against any individual.

A program will not be eligible as a qualified program if there is established a pattern of abuse or misrepresentation of this insurance

Medicaid-eligible children do not qualify for this insurance since they are already covered

II. Benefit Package

The benefit package is comprehensive and includes well-baby and well-child care, immunizations, physicians services, laboratory tests, inpatient and outpatient hospital costs, emergency services and transportation, prescription drugs, eye exams and eyeglasses, hearing exams and hearing aids, basic dental care, physical therapy, mental health services and pre-natal care and delivery.

If the parent objects to any of these services based on religious or moral conviction, they will not be provided. A religious organization operating a school-based program will not be required to provide any of these services if it is opposed by their religious beliefs.

III. Tax Credit

Each taxpayer who purchases a school-based health insurance policy for their dependent receives a tax credit for an amount up to 90% of the premium to buy health insurance for a qualifying dependent.

The credit is available to taxpayers based on a computation of adjusted gross income plus an additional \$5,000 amount for each child covered.

There is a full tax credit provided at the adjusted gross income of up to \$15,000 plus \$5,000 per child covered by the health insurance policy. The "\$15,000" figure represents approximately 200 percent of poverty for an individual under the age of 65.

For example, a family with adjusted gross income of \$25,000 and two qualifying children would receive a refundable tax credit of up to 90% of the family's cost for coverage of the two children.

As a family's income rises and the need for a subsidy is less critical, the credit phases out.

The credit is available only to subsidize qualified school-based coverage for children.

Establishment of premiums: the program will provide a minimum contribution of 20% to the premium before a fully subsidized child's premium is calculated. The subsidy amount phases out to 10% on a sliding scale for partially subsidized children.

IV. Other Provisions

There is coordination with other tax provisions subsidizing health costs to disallow the credit in instances where the taxpayer also claims a medical expense for the same premium cost or claims a deduction for health insurance costs of self-employed individuals.

Grants to states for school-based health insurance outreach and information programs would be established.

An employer may not discriminate against employees eligible for this health insurance subsidy. The employer may not condition or vary employee benefit contributions because an employee is eligible for this program subsidy. An employer is still free to cease or reduce employer contributions for health insurance coverage as long as it applies to all its employees.

RECOGNIZING THOMAS ERWIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WINNER OF CALIFORNIA'S DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL AWARD

HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 1997

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give special recognition to Thomas Erwin Elementary School, in La Puente, CA, which was recently recognized as one of California's Distinguished Schools.

Erwin Elementary is a school of 820 kindergarten through 8th grade students, 90 percent of whom are Latino, and is the first school in the Bassett Unified School District to receive this distinction. To achieve a Distinguished School Award it takes the dedication of an entire community of students, parents, faculty, staff, and administration. The coalescing of the Erwin community has been led by its dynamic leader, Principal Jose Reynoso, faculty and staff, along with the strong support of the members of the Board of Education and Superintendent Linda Gonzalez.

On a recent visit to Erwin, I was impressed by the school's state-of-the-art computer lab, its outstanding Gifted and Talented Education Program [GATE], which challenges students to reach their highest potential, and especially for Erwin's unique outdoor science pond, which was developed in a partnership with the Jet Propulsion Laboratories. This outdoor science pond is the envy of many schools in the community. The focal point of this ecosystem project is the pupil-made pond surrounded with flora and fauna indigenous to the area.

Another notable project is Erwin's bilingual education program, which gives over 500 limited-English-speaking students a strong academic foundation in their native language, and transitions them into an English instructional program. There is a tutorial program which utilizes "at risk" upper grade students as tutors for lower grade students, allowing both to develop an appreciation of each other, and helps foster self esteem and academic growth.

These programs, along with a strong academic emphasis, provide Erwin students with an excellent foundation for future success. A strong parent involvement program that encourages parents to visit the school and become partners in the educational process of students is in place and also ensures the student successes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Thomas Erwin Elementary School, one of California's Distinguished Schools, for its commitment to providing its students with the highest quality educational experience possible. Erwin Elementary serves as truly a model school.

FEDERAL LANDS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. JOHN R. THUNE

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 1997

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that recognizes a unique transportation need for many States. That need is

created by a dominating presence of Federal lands, whether those lands be national parks, national forests, Indian trust lands, or other Federal holdings.

While these lands are located in our States, they serve national interests and national priorities. Despite that fact, States often are obliged to serve those lands with roads funded either through the State's Federal allocation or from State tax dollars. The fact is these lands—though important—are largely unproductive in economic terms and make it difficult to support the infrastructure.

To ensure national interests are served, there must be a mechanism in place that allows States to maintain transportation infrastructure to and across Federal lands. My bill would do this.

As my colleagues are aware, the present surface transportation program authorized under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act provides funding for roads serving Federal lands. However the funding is confined to certain roads maintained by the Federal Government. Some examples include Indian reservations roads, public lands highways, and parkways and park highways. By no means does the current program support many of the important transportation links that serve Federal lands.

The Federal Lands Transportation Improvement Act would establish a new category of funding within the existing Federal Lands Highway Program. The program, to be known as the Cooperative Federal Lands Program, would complement existing programs for investments in Federal holdings. The bill would authorize \$200 million for this program. This amount, combined with present funding levels for existing Federal lands programs, would increase the overall Federal Lands Highway Program's effort to a level roughly proportionate to the overall program increases that have been discussed in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Under this proposal, funding for the important needs in the current Federal Lands Highway Program would be maintained while making room for the previously mentioned critical need.

The criteria establishing qualification is simple. States that have at least 4.5 percent of their total land area owned or held in trust by the Federal Government would qualify for a portion of these funds. These States then would be eligible to apply to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to receive funding for specific project needs. Once applications have been filed, projects would be funded in qualifying States in proportion to the percentage of the State which is Federal lands. The approval of the Secretary would help ensure the projects serve Federal lands, and are separate and apart from the other needs the State may have.

Serving Federal lands should be a shared responsibility. As the Federal Government holds lands in the public interest, there comes the responsibility to provide the public adequate access to, across, and from those lands. States do enjoy some benefits from public areas. However, the ability of States to generate tax revenue within those areas is limited. A modest reserve of Federal lands may provide few problems and some tax-generating opportunities. However, expansive Federal lands do not provide proportional enhancement. States then suffer from the diminishing marginal utility of additional Federal

lands. In other words, the presence of an inordinate amount of Federal lands creates more of a burden than it reaps in benefits.

Representing a State that has a significant Federal lands presence has its own unique challenges when it comes to transportation infrastructure. This bill would improve the responsiveness of the Federal Government to meet the transportation needs on Federal lands.

I have submitted a chart to be printed in the RECORD following my remarks that outlines which States would qualify under this legislation as well as the level of funding for which each State could qualify.

I thank my colleagues, Representatives YOUNG of Alaska, HILL of Montana, and CUBIN of Wyoming for joining me as original cosponsors of this bill. I hope other Members will join them in their support of this legislation.

COOPERATIVE FEDERAL LANDS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
Est. Funds Provided to Secretary of Transportation To Be Utilized On Projects in States That Have Significant Federal Land Holdings Descending Order Distribution

State	Total State land owned or held in trust by Federal Government (percent)	Total distribution (sect. 206) (percent)	Estimated distribution (sect. 101(5)(B))
Nevada	92.77	7.50	\$37,500,000
Arizona	71.94	7.50	37,500,000
Utah	69.55	7.50	37,500,000
Alaska	66.55	7.50	37,500,000
Idaho	63.74	7.41	37,034,743
Oregon	61.20	7.11	35,557,673
Wyoming	52.79	6.13	30,671,114
California	47.39	5.51	27,536,041
New Mexico	43.33	5.03	25,172,713
Colorado	37.45	4.35	21,755,842
Montana	33.45	3.89	19,433,113
Washington	32.68	3.80	18,986,531
Dist. of Columbia	24.24	2.82	14,085,782
Delaware	19.09	2.22	11,090,356
Hawaii	16.76	1.95	9,738,069
South Dakota	15.93	1.85	9,255,826
Minnesota	15.75	1.83	9,153,717
New Jersey	13.26	1.54	7,703,270
New Hampshire	13.22	1.54	7,680,985
Michigan	12.97	1.51	7,538,281
Virginia	11.85	1.38	6,884,715
Wisconsin	9.54	1.11	5,540,516
Arkansas	8.73	1.01	5,071,024
Maryland	8.39	0.97	4,873,581
Florida	8.06	0.94	4,682,675
North Carolina	7.98	0.93	4,633,560
Vermont	7.28	0.85	4,231,503
West Virginia	7.09	0.82	4,118,025
North Dakota	6.08	0.71	3,529,762
Tennessee	5.85	0.68	3,399,695
Missouri	4.76	0.55	2,768,253
Mississippi	4.55	0.53	2,644,933
Oklahoma	4.50	0.52	2,615,275
Georgia	4.50	0.52	2,612,425
Total (34)	100.00	100.00	500,000,000

Source: GSA "Summary Report of Real Property Owned by the United States Throughout the World As of September 30, 1994" August 1996

AUTHORIZING PRESIDENT TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO MOTHER TERESA

SPEECH OF

HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 1997

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, Mother Teresa is one of the great figures of our time. Her love and compassion are extended alike to rich and poor, sick and healthy, young and old. She ministers to the least fortunate who might otherwise have no home, no food, no

family, and no hope. And she witnesses to the well-off around the world who grow complacent in their wealth and would sacrifice the unborn in pursuit of material gain.

Because of all Mother Teresa stands for, and not in spite of it, I cannot support the awarding of this congressional gold medal. As I stated on a similar occasion earlier in this session, the \$30,000 authorized for this medal is more than the average annual income of my constituents. I can only guess how many times more it is than the lifetime incomes of those Mother Teresa so diligently serves.

The American people may rightly wonder how their Congress can approve such extravagance on the same day it debates the first balanced budget in three decades. These same Americans can and do pay their own tributes to Mother Teresa and other humanitarians through voluntary contributions to charities of their choice.

While the awarding of this medal springs from nothing but the best of motives on the part of my colleagues, I suggest that a more appropriate tribute would be to support her daily work. For my part, I will honor her with a contribution to her organization, Missionaries of Charity.

Mr. Speaker, no words can adequately express our admiration for and appreciation of Mother Teresa and her work. The only fitting tribute lies not in a gold medal, but rather in our own hearts and deeds.

HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY TO JERRY AND ROSA DICKSON

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 1997

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Alfred (Jerry) and Rosa Dickson's 50th wedding anniversary on June 7.

Jerry and Rosa met at the St. Aloysius Church carnival in Chicago in 1943. Jerry served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed on the S.S. *Gablian* during World War II. His service in the Navy ended in 1946 and Jerry and Rosa were married on June 7, 1947.

Jerry is retired after 40 years of service in the food industry in Chicago and Rosa is a homemaker. The couple raised 7 children and have 13 grandchildren. I join with their family today in wishing them a wonderful celebration and many more happy and productive years together.

WEST GLENS FALLS, NY FIRE CO. NO. 1 CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I have always been partial to the charm and character of small towns and small town people. That's why I travel home to my congressional district every weekend, to see the picturesque towns and scenery that marks the 22d district of New York. And my hometown of Queensbury and