Government of Iraq has repeatedly said it will not comply with UNSCR 688 of April 5, 1991. The Iraqi military routinely harasses residents of the north, and has attempted to ''Arabize'' the Kurdish, Turkomen, and Assyrian areas in the north. Iraq has not relented in its artillery attacks against civilian population centers in the south, or in its burning and draining operations in the southern marshes, which have forced thousands to flee to neighboring states.

The policies and actions of the Saddam Hussein regime continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, as well as to regional peace and security. The U.N. resolutions affirm that the Security Council be assured of Iraq's peaceful intentions in judging its compliance with sanctions. Because of Iraq's failure to comply fully with these resolutions, the United States will continue to apply economic sanctions to deter it from threatening peace and stability in the region.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 3, 1998.*

IN SUPPORT OF HMO REFORM

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to support the patient bill of rights and reform of HMOs because I believe it will help create a better health care system in this country.

Today as well I rise to support another project supported so strongly by our First Lady Hillary Clinton, and that is to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Microcredit Summit, an international conference held here in Washington last year. The summit launched a campaign to provide 100 million of the world's poorest families with credit for self-employment and other businesses and financial services by the year 2005. This, in fact, was not a handout but a hand up. This House passed that Microcredit for Self-reliance Act last year to assist in that endeavor.

Microenterprises are very small, informally organized businesses, other than those that grow crops. Microenterprises often employ only one person, the owner-operator, but in some lower-income countries microenterprises employ a third or more of the labor force. The microenterprise program is targeted at the poor, seeking to help then increase their income and assets, raise their skills and productivity, increase their pride and self-esteem. It helps mostly women.

I am here to support this program and hope the Congress will continue to fund it and applaud the First Lady for her vision in helping the world improve their lives and conditions.

Microcredit is particularly important because more than ninety percent of microcredit loans go to women, who are, along with children, hardest hit by poverty. The small loans enable women to open their own businesses and, ideally, increase their independence and status in male-dominated cultures.

The positive effects of the microenterprise program cannot be minimalized. Access to microcredit helps to educate women. It raises their income level and, thus, that of their families. It has been well-documented that education women have fewer children, have more time between births, and therefore, have fewer health problems and have healthier children.

On this one-year anniversary of their convention, I commend the thousands of delegates who came together at the Microcredit Summit, dedicated to improving the lives of our world's poor. I applaud not only the significant work that has been done, but that that is yet to come. I join other Members of this body in encouraging expansion of the Microenterprise program, particularly throughout Africa. No segment of the world's unfortunately enormous, poverty-stricken population should be denied the incredible opportunities this program provides.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, which is H.R. 2183. I want to express my thanks to the Speaker and to the leadership of this body for the action they took before we went home at the end of the first session in which they promised that we would have a vote in this House of Representatives on this floor in March on campaign finance reform.

I think this is a significant step that takes this body with the American people to reforming our campaign finance system that has led to so many abuses during the last election cycle. So I am grateful for the leadership of this body and their commitment, although it does not answer all of the problems. There is still a division as to exactly what we need to offer, but we need to address soft money, and that is understood by the leadership, as well as those who are committed to reform in this body.

So as momentum grows in America for campaign finance reform, I am delighted that the momentum is also growing for the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act. This last week we added 3 new cosponsors to this legislation. There are now 74 sponsors of the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act. Republicans and Democrats alike from all areas of the political spectrum can support this legislation because it is bipartisan, because it avoids the extreme, and it moves to what we can agree upon in the area of campaign finance reform, and that is really the criteria for reform that might be able to pass this bipartisan body.

I was encouraged this last week that we had the support of 189 former Members of Congress for campaign finance reform legislation. They came out and indicated their support for the proposals of former Presidents Bush, Carter and FORD, expressing the need and hope for campaign finance reform legislation that includes a ban on soft money. This range of former Members of Congress goes from Howard Baker to Mark Hatfield to Alan Simpson, to Bob Michel on the Republican side, Rudy Boschwitz, Brock Adams, Mickey Edwards, to David Pryor on the Democrat side, George McGovern, Howell Heflin, Alan Cranston, and so on. And so former Members of this body who have been taken back from the fray of politics here in the Congress can step back and say, we need this reform and they support it wholeheartedly.

So momentum is building in America for reform, but it is also building in this body and the support for the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act is also growing.

What does this legislation do? First of all, it bans soft money to the national political parties, and this must be the linchpin of any significant reform legislation. This last week Charlie Trie was arrested. He submitted himself after the indictment was returned, and what happened? What are the allegations? They involve the chase, the inexplicable, inordinate, exaggerated chase of soft money during the last election cycle, and that is what led to the abuses that we saw, that was revealed so extensively in Senator THOMPSON's hearings. So this proposal bans soft money to the national political parties.

The second thing it does, it indexes contribution limits to the rate of inflation, and this is important. An individual's contribution does not lose value, but it gradually increases as inflation increases. So this is important to individuals to keep the value of their contribution.

The third thing it does is that it helps the political parties to raise the honest money, the hard dollars, the individual contributions, and we need to help the political parties whenever we accompany it by a ban on soft money to them.

The fourth thing that it does is it increases disclosure, or it increases information to the American public. It increases information that is available to them on how much candidates spend, on where they get their contributions, more timely disclosure. When it comes to issue groups that influence our political process, it increases information available to the public as to who the group is and how much money they are spending if it is on radio or television. That is what is Constitutional; that is what the courts will allow us to do in a constitutional framework without violating anyone's freedom of speech. That is what the legislation does. It is very simple, straightforward and bipartisan.

What is unique about this legislation that sets it apart from other items of legislation that are being offered in this body? First of all, it is the result of a bipartisan process. We as freshmen, the Democrats and Republicans, met together for 4 months coming up with this legislation. The gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) was my Democrat counterpart that worked so diligently on this, and the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) I see here in this body that supports this and helped us produce this. So it is unique legislation, we have worked hard on it, we are grateful to the leadership for giving us the encouragement and bringing this to a vote in March on the floor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) in rising today to speak about the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act. I first want to acknowledge the hard work and leadership that he has provided in helping us bring this measure forward. This process started out with 6 freshmen Republicans, 6 freshmen Democrats who decided to form a task force, study the problems with campaign finances, and definitely a bipartisan proposal and a bipartisan solution to the problem. Mr. HUTCHINSON has provided outstanding leadership in helping us bring it this far. From that group of 12 people, we now have 74 cosponsors of the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act.

I want to remind my colleagues what the problem is. The problem that we have is soft money. Soft money is out of control. Just 4 years ago, 5 years ago now, both political parties, Democrats and Republicans, raised about $35 million in soft money. In the last campaign cycle, they raised about $270 million in soft money. Labor unions added over $100 million more to the process. Soft money is out of control. All we have to do is read the headlines about the problems that are going on in the White House, or in both political parties, and the influence that labor unions and corporations have over the political process now because of the excesses of soft money.

□ 1900

I want to remind my colleagues what soft money is, because as candidates we cannot accept soft money. What soft money is is funds that come from corporations, from labor union dues, and wealthy individuals that is in excess of contribution limits that they can make now.

Substantially, this money is unreported. We do not know where it comes from and, for the most part, we do not know how it is spent. But we can ban soft money in our political parties and not limit the right of individuals to speak out on issues.

As candidates, we are affected by soft money, because independent groups often spend huge sums of money to try to influence the political process, either in support of where we stand or in opposition to where we stand.

What can we do? Well, we can begin by supporting the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act. It bans soft money, and it does make it easier to raise the good money, which we call hard money.

We also need to make sure that workers have the right to choose whether or not they want to contribute to the political process and to protect them from those abuses by supporting the Paycheck Protection Act, and we can give members of other organizations that same right of protection.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want us to reform campaign finance; and if we talk to the Members of this House privately, they all believe that we need to reform it and that we ought to reform it. The problem is that the majority of the American people doubt that we actually have the courage and the conviction to get it done.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues today to join as cosponsors of the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act and the Paycheck Protection Act. We need to ban soft money. We need to protect workers. We can do this job when this comes to the floor in 6 weeks. I urge my colleagues to support it.

STOP MEDICARE OVERPAYMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to request my colleagues' support for legislation I introduced yesterday to save the Medicare program almost half a billion dollars a year in unnecessary overpayments for prescription drugs.

As the only pharmacist in the 105th Congress, let me first state that the price of these drugs is not due to the family pharmacist. The high price is set by the pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Making the situation even worse, under current Medicare law, the program reimburses doctors who prescribe covered drugs for 95 percent of the ''sticker price'' quoted by pharmaceutical manufacturers, rather than the actual cost to the doctor of acquiring the drug.

Furthermore, Medicare pays doctors for the cost of their expenses, overhead, consultation time, and for administering the drugs under the practice expense system, not to mention the close to $7 billion that Medicare spends each year to educate our Nation's doctors.

A recent analysis by the Department of Health and Human Services Inspector General shows that Medicare is wasting millions each year under the current system, $447 million alone in 1996.

Our patients deserve better. The Stop Medicare Overpayment Act, based on the President's fiscal year 1999 budget and included in a comprehensive anti-fraud proposal introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK) last year, will go a long way toward establishing a fair and adequate payment system.

The Stop Medicare Overpayment Act is simple: Reimburse the doctors for what they paid for the drug. They already get paid for their office overhead, dispensation and ''professional services'' through the Medicare system. Why allow a small group of persons to reap a $447 million windfall benefit each year?

Seventy-five percent of the cost of these overpayments are coming directly out of the taxpayers' wallet. Twenty-five percent come directly from senior citizens who are forced to pay a higher Part B premium.

My legislation will go a long way toward ending these overpayments. Unfortunately, it will not do anything to address the root of this problem: the high cost of prescription drugs charged by pharmaceutical companies.

It is indeed unfortunate that here in the world's richest nation our seniors should be forced to choose between buying food or buying prescription drugs and that our pharmacies should be discriminated against by drug manufacturers.

As Congress considers ways in which to reduce the $23 billion in Medicare fraud and abuse, my legislation should be first on the list. It is a sensible, responsible, and prudent approach to rein in unnecessary Medicare costs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important initiative.