

Madam Speaker, I would like to put a human face on this issue and share one of the many constituent letters I have received from families who are afraid that a loved one will lose their home health care.

Dear Ms. Stabenow:

Suppose you were 84 years old, living on a Social Security monthly check of \$650 in a small town. Suppose further that approximately one-and-a-half years ago you were declared legally blind because of complications from diabetes, and then one year ago you fell and broke your hip, but most importantly, through all of this you kept a sound mind and you owned your own home and had lived alone since your husband died 25 years earlier.

Now suppose also that when you broke your hip you had to be put in a nursing home, and the only one with available beds was 45 minutes from your home, family and friends. Now, further suppose that thanks to a home health care program, you were able to return home where you could live in your own home, talk to your friends on the telephone, attend senior citizen functions, keep your dog, and live somewhat of a normal life. All of this is possible because home health care provided:

A nurse to oversee administering of daily insulin, which you could not give yourself because you could not see, and an aid to come in twice a day for an hour to make sure you were well, got your bath, had breakfast and dinner, and had regular contact with the outside world.

I do not have to suppose any of this, because that 84 year old woman is my mother. I am not a great supporter of government programs, but taking care of our elderly so they can live with dignity has got to be a valid issue for government.

After such a long introduction, why am I writing this, my first-ever letter to a Congresswoman? Why, because the Balanced Budget Act has endangered my mother's home health care. She is in danger of losing her home and really, her life. The spending limits will cause the Health Department to drop her from the program. The only alternative is a nursing home. My mother cannot continue to live alone without the assistance that she has been receiving. Please help to restore the budget cuts in Medicare.

I urge my colleagues today to act quickly. There are many initiatives that have been introduced by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN); the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN); the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL); the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS); the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. WEYGAND), to name just a few, and there are several bills. Unfortunately, we must act now if we are going to solve this issue in time for too many families.

First, I am pleased to join with the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN); the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN); and the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. WEYGAND) today in urging the immediate adoption of the Home Health Access Preservation Act, a bill that will correct many of these problems, and I urge immediate consideration by this House.

If this does not happen quickly, then I would secondarily urge that the bill introduced by the gentleman from

West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and myself and others that would place a 3-year moratorium on the interim perspective payment system for home health care benefits be passed immediately. We must act either to fix the problem or put a moratorium on the current payment system until it is fixed, or we are going to see more and more serious repercussions for our families.

Madam Speaker, after a serious examination of the data, I believe that either of these approaches are budget-neutral. The Balanced Budget Agreement has targeted \$16.1 billion in savings to home health care. But the new CBO baseline now projects Medicare savings will exceed \$26 billion.

This is \$9.9 billion more than the expected savings from the Balanced Budget Agreement. Unfortunately this savings has been achieved on the backs of efficient, quality home care providers and the people who need care.

In the next few days I will be asking my colleagues to join me in a letter to President Clinton and to Speaker Gingrich. The letter will urge them to recognize the crisis in the home health care industry and implore them to make the resolution of this crisis a national priority. Congress should not let one more family or one more senior citizen suffer. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to sign these letters and to get involved in finding an immediate solution to this home health care crisis. Thank you.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

With Your goodness to us that is so freely given we place before You, O God, our personal petitions and pray that You would give strength when we are weak, heal us when we are hurt, forgive us when we miss the mark and encourage us to hear Your word and receive Your grace. We are grateful for so much and yet our needs are great, so we ask in this our prayer that Your spirit would abide in our hearts and Your presence live deep in our souls. May we be the people You would have us be and do those things that honor You and serve people everywhere. This is our earnest prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SHIMKUS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PRIVATE CALENDAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is Private Calendar day. The Clerk will call the first individual bill on the Private Calendar.

LARRY ERROL PIETERSE

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 379) for the relief of Larry Errol Pieterse.

There being no objection, the Clerk read the bill as follows:

H.R. 379

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. WAIVER OF GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL OF, OR DENIAL OF ADMISSION TO, LARRY ERROL PIETERSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 212(a)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and notwithstanding paragraphs (1)(A) and (2)(B) of section 241(a) of such Act (before redesignation as section 237(a) of such Act by section 305(a) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996), Larry Errol Pieterse may not be removed or deported from the United States or denied admission to the United States by reason of any offense for which he received a full pardon from the Governor of Florida prior to January 1, 1992.

(b) RESCISSION OF OUTSTANDING ORDER OF REMOVAL OR DEPORTATION.—The Attorney General shall rescind any outstanding order of removal or deportation, or any finding of deportability or removability, that has been entered against Larry Errol Pieterse by reason of any offense for which he received a full pardon from the Governor of Florida prior to January 1, 1992.

(c) PERMANENT RESIDENCE STATUS.—Notwithstanding any order terminating the status of Larry Errol Pieterse as an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, for purposes of the Immigration and Nationality Act he shall be considered lawfully admitted for permanent residence as of November 3, 1981, and such status shall be considered not to have changed between such date and the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER.—Notwithstanding section 101(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, any offense for which Larry Errol Pieterse received a full pardon from the Governor of Florida prior to January 1, 1992, may not be considered in determining whether he is, or during any period has been, a person of good moral character for purposes of such Act.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.