

benefit, to date—according to CBO (January 1998) estimates—has already been cut by \$9.9 billion more than the Congress intended when the Congress passed the Balanced Budget Act. It seems only fair to give some of this money back by repealing the per beneficiary limit. It is this limit which works against patients who do not understand why there is a limit in the first place and why it could possibly be in hugely differing amounts depending on the agency that they visit. Undoubtedly, the behavior the patients will exhibit is to try to shop for the home care agency that has the highest per beneficiary limit. This, in turn, will have an effect of raising overall costs to the Medicare program.

C. Replace it with another limit. A final option, which has great merit, is to replace the aggregate per beneficiary limit with another limit. One example might be a global budget for Medicare home care expenditures, which sets ceilings for spending each year that cannot be exceeded under any circumstances. This concept could be coupled with a Gramm-Rudman-Hollings-like trigger, which could be applied prospectively. This mechanism would automatically initiate cuts if the Secretary of Health and Human Services finds that there is any danger that the fiscal ceiling could potentially be breached in any year. The advantage of this approval is obvious. By substituting one financial limit for another, the proposal should be budget-neutral. One suggestion that has been made is to incorporate the CBO 98 baseline as the ceiling. The essence of this proposal is included in H.R. 4404, the Homebound Elderly Relief Opportunity Act of 1998 (HERO), sponsored by Congressman Van Hilleary (TN). Senator Thad Cochran (MS) has introduced a companion bill in the Senate, S. 2508.

As I noted above, the repeal of the aggregate per beneficiary limit is probably the best way to go. This is a world apart from a moratorium, or total repeal of all home health provisions in the Balanced Budget Act, or even a repeal of the entire IPS. It is a more limited and rifle specific application. I believe Congress should be content to save \$16.2 billion from the Medicare home health benefit, as planned, when the Balanced Budget Act was passed. We should return the rest to the home health patients, the sickest of the sick, who need it. This approach would also allow Congress to cancel the forthcoming October 1, 1999, additional 15 percent cut.

For those who insist on the strict definition of budget neutrality (and that home health should be cut by more than \$16.2 billion), the notion of replacing the per beneficiary limit with another financial ceiling makes great sense. Because it incorporates and makes an absolute ceiling of the Medicare FY 98-02 CBO baseline, the HERO proposal should be budget neutral. HERO will also blunt the effect of the pending 15 percent cut. To be more precise, it makes the 15 percent cut contingent. Any portion of it that is needed will be employed to make sure that the Medicare home care benefit does not exceed the ceiling established in the 1998 CBO baseline. I helped create the Senate Budget Committee, and was one of its charter members. I hope CBO will agree with my judgments.

The HERO legislation gives providers the breathing room they need until Prospective Payment is ready. Because it sets overall spending limits and includes a Gramm-Rudman-Hollings-like trigger, it is clear to providers that this is not a signal to return to business as usual. To do so means a swift crackdown from HCFA. Because payments to home health are capped, there is no way that expenditures can exceed budget limits and therefore, no way that home health spending

can trigger increased out-of-pocket costs, such as increases in the Part B premium. Finally, HCFA should be able to administer this legislation easily. It will require little or nothing in terms of computer capacity. This will free up resources to help solve their Y2K problem and point them in the direction of developing a PPS plan for home health care. What is best of all—this proposal does not involve new spending. I urge you to consider the HERO approach.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Senator FRANK E. MOSS (ret.).

THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS ON CYPRUS

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues the following remarks by George Paraskevaides, a renowned Cypriot businessman, concerning the situation on Cyprus. Mr. Paraskevaides, a very good friend of the United States, as a citizen of Cyprus, has some excellent insights to offer with regard to why the American people need to be concerned about achieving a peaceful and just solution to the Cyprus problem.

Mr. Speaker I submit the full text of Mr. Paraskevaides address to the 50th Annual Dinner Dance of the American-Hellenic chamber of Commerce to be inserted at this point in the RECORD.

ADDRESS BY MR. GEORGE PARASKEVAIDES

Your decision to honour me with the 'Man of the Year' award, on this your 50th Anniversary Dinner Dance, has deeply touched me, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please allow me, to consider this honour as extending to all Cypriots, both in and out of Cyprus, who are struggling for the liberation of our country.

Although not a resident of this great country, I am well aware of the success of your business activities, which, in many cases, are not limited to the boundaries of the United States.

I am sure that all of you, Americans, Greek-Americans and Cypriot-Americans, are very concerned with the problems of Hellenism. Among these, the Cyprus problem is very high on the list of priorities, and I beg your permission to elaborate on this.

I am of the opinion, that we all agree, that the Second World War was a disaster for mankind, with millions of victims. We also believed that such sacrifice would have resulted in universal freedom, democracy, the Rule of Law, and respect for Human Rights. Principles that should apply to every corner of the world.

Regrettably, since the tragic events of 1974, when Turkey invaded Cyprus, these principles, which form the corner stone of the Constitution of the United States, and of the Free World, have not been implemented in my country. The Turkish occupation, with all its evils, still continues.

You are citizens of the United States of America; but you are also descendants of ancient Greeks, and you carry with you the ideals of Democracy. You are more sensitive to its principles, because democracy grew out of the bones of your ancestors.

The ancient Greeks, did not keep democracy and civilization to themselves; they spread them, and taught them to the world, through Alexander the Great.

Nobody can deny the great and important role that the Greeks contributed to today's civilization. The world, no doubt, is grateful to Greece.

It is my humble request, that you sustain and even increase, if possible, the efforts of the world Hellenism to help Cyprus resolve its tragic situation, and reach a fair solution of its national problem, for all its people, whether Greek, or Turkish, or other ethnic minorities. I have no doubt that the misery and suffering brought about by the Turkish occupation, have increased the desire of all Cypriots to live together against as friends, in a united and peaceful country without armies.

Dear friends, the island of Cyprus, in the center of the Eastern Mediterranean, can be made into a shining star, which can help to change the whole of the Mediterranean, so that the people of the area can live in brotherly peace, for the glory of peace in the whole world.

Thank you once again for honouring me tonight, and on behalf of my wife and family, and my fellow Cypriots, I wish you health, happiness and continuous progress with God's blessings.

God bless America and Cyprus.

A DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity before we adjourn to recognize the longest serving member of my staff, Thelma Hummel, for all the excellent work she has done over the years on behalf of thousands of Illinois citizens residing in Chicago's Northwest suburbs. Thelma has been a case worker with my office since 1988, and never will you find a more dedicated hardworking public servant. She has had to contend with the often frustrating task of trying to help constituents work with the many various agencies and departments which comprise our all too massive federal bureaucracy.

While Members of Congress often receive credit for the good deeds our offices may accomplish in helping individual constituents, it is our staffs which deserve much of the recognition. My reputation, with respect to my constituents, has benefited greatly from all the excellent work Thelma has done for my office.

Indeed, just the other day I received a letter from a constituent and veteran, Walter McCostlin, which served as another reminder of how much good Thelma has done over the years. Walter wrote that "We are only as good as those with whom we associate and/or surround ourselves." Walter went on to say that "Mrs. Hummel's dedication to seek truth and justice, devotion to uphold traits expected of government officials, and perseverance to safeguard [our] rights . . . cannot be surpassed. Her attention to duty and perseverance while supporting and assisting constituents . . . characterizes her as an example to be followed by all legislative employees." I could not have said it better, Mr. McCostlin.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of the 8th Congressional District of Illinois should be grateful and proud to have Thelma Hummel working for them.