

legal, religious, fraternal and industrial communities provide for virtually all the needs of the folks in Roswell and the area.

The next 125 years will no doubt see similar developments—growth, problems, ups and downs—as these years since 1873 have witnessed. But the good folks of Roswell will be proud to live here and enjoy being a part of the Land of Enhancement!•

VERMONT HOME HEALTH CARE

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it has been a long road to get us where we are today to a modification of the unfair Medicare home health interim payment system (IPS) reimbursement that passed last year as part of the Balanced Budget Act (BBA). Making sure that this change was passed this year was not about politics but about helping those with the most to lose, the seniors and disabled Americans who rely on home health care.

At the beginning of this year, when I discussed with my colleagues a problem with the "Medicare Home Health IPS," I received a lot of blank stares. The rising level of understanding about this problem—and the rising level of support to fix it—was a commendable and effective team effort on the part of home health beneficiaries and their care givers. They were able to explain to their representatives in Congress why the short-term tinkering in health policy that created the IPS was unfair and was done with too little thought for the consequences.

The IPS passed last year sought to reduce overall spending on home health care by eliminating fraud, waste and abuse to preserve the benefit for those who truly need it. But as Vermont providers know all too well, there were unintended consequences of this proposal that severely harmed their ability to provide care to the most vulnerable populations.

Under this faulty system, Vermont's 13 non-profit home health agencies predicted millions of dollars in reduced payments this year while already boasting the lowest average Medicare costs in the country. The skewed thinking behind the IPS created a system under which Vermont was punished for its low-cost, efficient provision of home health care while high-cost, inefficient providers were rewarded.

A year ago this month, my office began to receive phone calls and letters from Vermont home health beneficiaries and their care givers who were beginning to understand what the overwhelming impact of the new IPS would be. In an effort to raise this issue to the level of where we are today, concerned senators and representatives began the drum beat of highlighting this as a critical issue that must have relief this year.

From the beginning there was a lot of reluctance by the congressional leadership to take up any Medicare legislation this year.

The home health agencies in my state were relentless in their efforts to

continue to call attention to the fundamental unfairness of the Medicare IPS that punished their prudent and efficient provision of service to Vermonters.

My staff and I met with home health officials, and we agreed early on that any and all pressure that we could put on the Administration and other members of Congress would be critical to ensuring the ability of home health care providers to meet the needs of Vermonters.

Several bipartisan Senate bills were introduced over the past year, the first being one sponsored by Senators KENNEDY, KERRY, JEFFORDS and myself. We knew at the time that this was not the perfect answer but that we needed to start a process to get the ball rolling.

Subsequently, several other bills were introduced which I also cosponsored, most notably by Senator COLLINS and another by Senator GRASSLEY. I also joined Senator BOND in offering an amendment in the Appropriations Committee which we withdrew once we were assured that the Republican leadership was taking this issue seriously and would deal with it separately. My colleague from Vermont, Senator JEFFORDS, has pushed hard for this solution as a member of the Finance Committee.

I applaud the bipartisan nature of the work to get this situation turned around. The beneficiaries, the agencies which serve them, and Members of Congress continued to press until we found some relief from the fundamental unfairness in the payment system for home health care.

The Omnibus Appropriations Act conference agreement passed today makes necessary changes to the IPS payment system for the Medicare's home health care benefit. In short, the agreement is expected to provide some equity to agencies which have low-cost, low-utilization practices relative to other agencies by increasing the per beneficiary limits. Agencies below the national median per beneficiary limit will have their limit increased by one-third of the difference between their limit and the national median. The agreement also delays the implementation of the prospective payment system (PPS) until October 1, 2000, and delays an across-the-board 15 percent reduction in payments to home health agencies until that date.

Like most contentious issues, this fix does not go as far as I would have liked and as far as I believe efficient providers like those in Vermont deserve. I support it however because it is better than the status quo.

In the longer term, we need to stop ignoring a more fundamental problem. Congress needs to address the long-term health care needs of the American people.

Stepping back to understanding why the IPS was passed last year, we can see that it was in recognition of the difficulty of designing a more permanent PPS for Medicare home health re-

imbursement, coupled with the need to immediately control spending.

In the long term, a well-designed PPS will provide the Medicare program with the best means to control home health spending and address the problems Vermont home care agencies, and other agencies around the country that are able to provide quality, low-cost care.

The BBA requires implementation of a PPS by agencies in FY 2000. The PPS would establish a fixed, predetermined payment per unit of service, adjusted for patient characteristics that affect the cost of care. Under a well-designed PPS system, efficient providers would be financially rewarded. Conversely, inefficient ones would need to better control their costs to remain viable. If a PPS is not properly implemented, Medicare will not save money, cost-control incentives will at best be weak, and access to and quality of care could suffer.

I am committed to working with my colleagues to make sure that we work steadfastly in overcoming any hurdles in developing a well-designed PPS so that we do not find ourselves in the same situation that we found ourselves with the IPS.•

KIRK O'DONNELL

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, two weeks ago, a number of my colleagues and many members of the Washington community gathered at the National Guard Museum for a memorial tribute to a highly respected and admired figure in modern American political life: Kirk O'Donnell. As most of my colleagues know, Kirk O'Donnell was the chief counsel to former Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. and Boston Mayor Kevin White, and he also served as an advisor to Mayors, Congressmen, Senators, and even Presidents. Tragically, Kirk O'Donnell recently died at the age of 52.

As a fellow Democrat, New Englander, and Irish-American, I had many occasions to cross paths with Kirk O'Donnell, and we eventually became friends. And I have met few people in my political career who were as capable and well-liked as Kirk.

Al Hunt of the Wall Street Journal remembered Kirk as "one of the ablest and most honorable people in American politics." Tom Oliphant of the Boston Globe said, "he was arguably the best mayor Boston never had. . . . Kirk O'Donnell's life demonstrates that all of us can make a difference and that each of us should try."

In an era of growing cynicism toward politics, he made people feel optimistic that government could have a positive impact on people's lives. It is always difficult to lose someone who is clearly so special, but it is made all the more difficult by the fact that Kirk was so young and had so much more to offer.

The afterword from the O'Donnell funeral program was Ralph Waldo Emerson's definition of what constitutes a successful life:

“ . . . to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better place than we found it, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life breathed easier because you have lived. . . . This is to have succeeded.”

By this measure, Kirk O'Donnell led a successful life. He was a remarkable man, and I will truly miss his friendship.

Kirk O'Donnell is survived by his wife Kathryn and his two children, Holly and Brendan. I offer my heartfelt sympathies to them all.●

TRIBUTE TO DERECK ORR

● Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank Dereck Orr, who worked with me and my appropriations staff this last year on putting together the fiscal year 1999 Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill. Dereck came to me last year as a Presidential Management Intern on detail from the President's COPS office, and proved to be a tremendous asset during this difficult appropriations process.

If ever there was a year to learn about Congress and the Appropriations process, it would be this year. The Commerce, Justice, State subcommittee had a long three days of debate on the floor of the Senate in July, a month-long conference with the House of Representatives, and extension of deadline after deadline in completing action on our bill and the Omnibus Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1999. Throughout this entire process, Dereck maintained poise, integrity, responsibility, and unfaltering support for me and my appropriations staff in getting the job done. He came in weekends, worked late at night, and basically worked above and beyond the call of duty. In particular, Dereck tackled the controversy-ridden issues surrounding the Census Bureau and worked with that agency and the House and Senate Appropriations staff on finding viable solutions for funding concerns and realistic means of addressing the Bureau's policy concerns. Dereck also versed himself in the Department of State title of our bill, making recommendations to staff during the conference on our bill.

Dereck was truly an asset and welcome addition to my committee staff this last year. He came to me highly recommended by those that worked with him at the Department of Justice; he lived up to those recommendations and then some. Dereck is now back at COPS where they again will benefit from this excellent work. We will miss him here in the Senate, but certainly wish him, his wife, Kim, and their new addition well in all their future endeavors.●

GIRL'S INTERNATIONAL FORUM

● Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I believe it is important for girls and young women to raise awareness about their concerns, and to work to shape the beliefs and policies which affect girls' lives throughout the world. This year, the Girl's International Forum, sponsored by an organization in my state, brought together fifteen outstanding girls from thirteen states to Seneca Falls. For three days, they met and drafted the following Girl's Declaration of Sentiments. I want to share their thoughtful ideas with my colleagues now.

I ask that the declaration be printed in the RECORD.

The declaration follows:

GIRL'S INTERNATIONAL FORUM—GIRLS' DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, SENECA FALLS, NEW YORK 1998

Fifteen girls, ages 8-18, created a Girls' Declaration of Sentiments in Seneca Falls, New York on July 16-19, 1998. The girls, hailing from thirteen different states, were brought to Seneca Falls by Girls International Forum, a non-profit organization affiliated with New Moon Magazine for Girls.

Modeled after the original Declaration of Sentiments developed in Seneca Falls 150 years ago by suffragists, the Girls' Declaration defines an agenda for the Girls Movement, just as the Declaration of 1848 defined an agenda for the first wave of the Women's Movement. The Girls' Declaration focuses on 8 areas of concern and proposed solutions.

The Girls' Declaration was unveiled at the Closing Ceremony of Celebrate '98, the sesquicentennial celebration of the First Women's Rights Convention, and received a standing ovation. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Nancy Rubin, accepted the Girls' Declaration on behalf of the U.S. government and pledged to share the document with both the Clinton administration and the United Nations.

Girls International Forum was created in 1994 so girls could help shape the policies which affect girls' lives around the world. GIF's first project took place in 1995 when they sent 13 U.S. girls (ages 10-17) to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. As the largest girls delegation at the conference, GIF distributed the Girls Agenda (a pamphlet of girls' issues collected from girls worldwide) and raised awareness about girls' eagerness to participate in setting policy that affects girls' lives.

GIRLS' DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS PREAMBLE

When, in the course of human events, girls are denied the rights and respect they are entitled to, it becomes necessary for girls everywhere to take action to improve their everyday lives.

We believe that all people—women, men, girls and boys—are created equal. We all have certain rights as people, and it is up to all of us to make sure that these rights are respected and protected. When our society doesn't recognize these rights, changes must occur. Change should not be made without good reason, but the state of our society compels us to work for change. The rights of girls have not been respected. To gain this respect, we must speak out to declare our independence and explain our reasons for doing so.

SPORTS

Facts: Girls have been denied equal access to some sports, positions, and resources. The

little attention and encouragement girls receive is frustrating. Girls have been excluded from leadership roles, decreasing their capacity to participate fully as athletes.

Solutions: Girls need to speak out. Girls can create coalitions, push to be included in all sports, or create their own teams. The adults in girls' lives should encourage them with persistent support. Title IX should be more widely recognized, enforced, and expanded in all communities.

MEDIA/SELF-ESTEEM

Facts: Girls feel they must fit into an image the media has created. When they don't, they often lose their self-esteem. This loss causes many girls to be more vulnerable to peer pressure which can lead to substance abuse, eating disorders, teenage sex, pregnancy, and other problems.

Solutions: The media should promote the beauty of all girls regardless of size, shape, or ethnicity. Girls should take the initiative to be healthier, think positively about themselves, and look for the good things in life. Girls can find support from people in similar situations, mentors, and youth organizations. Girls must take action by forming groups, writing letters, and protesting against the media's distorted images of girls.

EMPLOYMENT

Facts: Girls and women have the right to physically demanding or mentally challenging jobs if they choose. They have the right to earn 100 percent of what boys and men earn. Girls and women have the right to a combination of family and career. They have the right to be hired based on capabilities, not on appearance. Girls have the right to work comfortably without fearing sexual harassment.

Solution: To accomplish these goals, girls must stand up for themselves. They should help each other understand the problems they face. Girls should stay positive and strong while fighting this peaceful battle for equality.

VIOLENCE

Facts: Violence and abuse occur everywhere in this nation, limiting girls' independence to fully explore the world around them. Sexual harassment and other kinds of abuse happen in schools and in some families, lowering the self-esteem of the abused or the threatened.

Solutions: Girls and their communities should make sure that social services and police are accessible and available, and that all people know how to reach them. The federal government should create a national toll-free hotline that includes teenagers who have experienced these issues.

EDUCATION

Facts: The educational system focuses on men. Not seeing women in leadership positions in history books and in schools gives girls the impression that women are not able to lead as well as men. In school, many teachers and counselors fail to encourage girls to take non-traditional classes such as high-level math and science classes, weightlifting, auto mechanics, and others. When they do take those classes, girls are often ridiculed for enrolling. Boys are allowed to be outspoken in class, while girls are expected to be quiet and self-controlled, leading girls to believe that what they think or say does not matter.

Solutions: Girls should communicate with teachers, counselors, parents, and others about their educational rights. If this approach fails, girls must write out their concerns and present them to higher authorities such as principals, school boards, superintendents, or state departments of education.

RELIGION

Facts: Many religions teach girls during childhood that only men are meant to be