

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HEALTH RESEARCH AND QUALITY ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2506) to amend title IX of the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research:

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. TIERNEY, for offering this amendment today to focus on the need for universal health care in the United States. Our amendment clarifies that the Agency for Health Research and Quality should allow for studies that would compare the effect of a single-payer plan on national health expenditures with the health expenditures under the current system.

Our Nation spends more per capita on health care than any other Western nation. And yet, we have 43 million Americans with no health coverage. This is absurd.

We know that a universal, single-payer system will save the United States billions of dollars a year. Now let's prove it.

Earlier this year, a study commissioned by the Massachusetts Medical Society reported that in Massachusetts alone, a single-payer system could save over a billion dollars and eliminate more than 80 percent of patients' out-of-pocket costs. Not to mention covering hundreds of thousands of uninsured residents of that state. Imagine what the savings could be on a national basis.

Specifically, cutting the bureaucratic overhead by creating a single-payer system would have saved about \$3.6 billion in Massachusetts. The added cost savings under this model would add up to a \$5 billion reduction in the \$36 billion the state spends on health care each year. The report further states that it would then only cost \$4 billion of the \$5 billion in savings to cover all of the uninsured in the state and expand health benefits to those who have insurance. While this is the high-end estimate, the low-end estimate still finds the state saving \$170 million while increasing coverage for its residents.

The group that commissioned Massachusetts study, its state Medical Society, has traditionally not been a supporter of a single-payer system. And yet they had the insight to at least study how much their state could save under the program. That is what we are asking under the Tierney amendment today.

Should we live in a society in which all people, because they are human beings, have access to the best quality health care that the society can offer, or do we live in a society where health care is a commodity offered to people on ability to pay—with the wealthy in this country getting, probably, the best health care in the world—while middle class, working

class and poor people receive a lower quality of health care or none at all?

At a time when our health care costs continue to skyrocket while the availability of care declines, single-payer is becoming an even more attractive option and the best, most cost-effective solution to insuring all Americans.

I hope that my colleagues will support this amendment.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING DEDICATION OF THE CITIZENS OF INDIANAPOLIS TO CURING BREAST CANCER

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 1999

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the commitment the citizens of Indianapolis have shown toward reaching a cure for breast cancer.

Breast cancer is more than just a women's issue, it is a family issue. Too many families have lost mothers and daughters, aunts and sisters to this hideous disease. In the 1990's it is estimated that 2,000,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer resulting in nearly 500,000 deaths. In 1999 alone, an estimated 175,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer with 43,300 estimated deaths.

Excluding skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women, and the leading cause of cancer death among women between the ages of 40–55. When breast cancer strikes, it strikes at families, hopes, and dreams.

Thanks to the monumental effort of Hoosiers and Americans across the country, we are beginning to strike back against breast cancer. The cornerstone of this effort is the emphasis of early detection. Mammograms can reveal the presence of cancers up to 2 years or more before a regular clinical examination or breast self examination, reducing mortality by more than 30 percent.

Education on the benefits of early detection are critical to reducing the breast cancer mortality rate. The Cancer Institute recommends routine mammography for women in their 40's and older. Early detection increases treatment options and survival rates. This message is particularly important for African-American women because they have the highest mortality rate for breast cancer and for Hispanic women because breast cancer incidence rates are increasing faster among Hispanics than other women.

On Saturday, October 16, 1999, 4,500 Hoosiers will participate in a 5K walk sponsored by the American Cancer Society to celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In honor of these heroes, I proclaim and declare the 16th day of October, 1999, to be "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Day" in Indiana's 10th Congressional District.

RECOGNITION OF LOCUST GROVE MAYOR JERRY MICHAEL ELKINS

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 1999

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Jerry Michael Elkins for the contributions he has made to the small town of Locust Grove, Georgia, in Henry County. A lifelong resident of Locust Grove, he has served the city in an elected capacity since 1976, first elected to the city council in that year. He served in that position for seven years before he was elected mayor in 1983, he accepted a position as city manager in 1995 and served as both city manager and mayor up until this year. His performance led the town of Helen, from the northern part of the state, to offer him a job as their city manager. Mayor Elkins resigned as Locust Grove's city manager in August, and will step down as mayor on December 31, 1999, when his term expires.

When he leaves for Helen, he leaves behind strong friendship, and many achievements. He served in the Georgia Army National Guard for five years, was a member of the board of directors for the Atlanta Regional Commission. He was past president of the Henry County Municipal Association, a member and president of the Locust Grove Lions club, and a master mason. He was a member of the board of directors for the United Way in Henry County, and a past chief of the Henry County Fire Department Station No. 2. In short, he was an extremely active member of the Locust Grove community.

His leadership has won him awards, both from Locust Grove, and from the Georgia Municipal Association. One of the greatest honors was bestowed upon him in 1996, when Locust Grove's city council named the city pavilion in his honor.

Too often our news dwells on trouble and troublemakers but not on positive people. Mayor Elkins' hard work on behalf of his fellow citizens in Locust Grove provides an example of true participatory democracy. Let us highlight those who contribute to our lives—people like Mayor Jerry Elkins.

RECOGNIZING THOMAS HARTMAN

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 1999

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Thomas Hartman of Chestfield, who has been chosen to participate in the 1999–2000 Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) program.

CBYX program was inaugurated in 1983 to commemorate the Tricentennial year of German settlement in the United States. Since then, more than 11,000 American and German

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