

We should get about the business of closing this legislation down. Every day it delays people are being hurt. It is wrong. We ought to get about doing the people's business and pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights.

To reiterate, the American people have waited more than 3 years for Congress to send the President a Patient's Bill of Rights that protects all patients and holds HMOs and other health plans accountable for their actions.

Every day that the conference on the Patient's Bill of Rights fails to produce agreement on meaningful patient protections, 60,000 more patients endure added pain and suffering. More than 40,000 patients report a worsening of their condition as a result of health plan abuses.

By all accounts, Republicans are working amongst themselves on the Patients' Bill of Rights. They are working in the middle of the night, behind closed doors, to produce a partisan bill that will surely fail the test of true reform. The crocodile tears were flowing from the eyes of the Senate Republican leadership on June 8 when we took the bipartisan, House-passed Managed Care Consensus Act to the floor for its first Senate vote. That legislation, which passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support last year, is a sensible compromise that extends meaningful protections to all patients and guarantees that health plans be held accountable when their abuses result in injury or death.

Democratic conferees sent a letter to Senator NICKLES on June 13. In that letter, we reiterated that we remained ready to negotiate on serious proposals that provide a basis for achieving strong, effective protections. But the assistant majority leader has not responded. The silence is deafening.

We have been forewarned of what to expect from a partisan bill. The Amer-

ican people won't stand for a sham bill, and we won't either.

Make no mistake. We want a bill that can be signed into law this year. There is not much time left. We need to act now.

The Republican leadership continues to refuse to guarantee meaningful protections to all Americans. They continue to delay and deny action on this critical issue. This debate is about real people. It's about women, children, and families.

The gap between the Senate Republican plan and the bipartisan legislation enacted by the House in the Norwood-Dingell bill is wide. And the intransigence of the Republican conferees is preventing adequate progress.

Republican conferees steadfastly refuse to cover all Americans. Their flawed approach leaves out two-thirds of those with private health insurance—more than 120 million Americans.

The Senate Republican leadership says no to farmers, truck drivers, police officers, teachers, home day care providers, fire fighters, and countless others who buy insurance on their own or work for state or local governments.

The bipartisan legislation that we support and which we voted on in the Senate on June 8 covers everyone. But the Republican leadership said no.

The protections in the House-passed bill are urgently needed by patients across the country. Yet, the Republican leadership is adopting the practice of delay and denial that HMOs so often use themselves to delay and deny patients the care they need.

It's just as wrong for Congress to delay and deny these needed reforms, as it is for HMOs to delay and deny needed care.

Congress can pass bipartisan legislation that provides meaningful protections for all patients and guarantees

accountability when health plan abuse results in injury or death. The question is, will we?

The American people are waiting for an answer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. FITZGERALD pertaining to the introduction of S. 2790 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FITZGERALD. I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m., June 27.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:56 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, June 27, 2000, at 9:30 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate June 26, 2000:

##### THE JUDICIARY

TAMAR MEEKINS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE HENRY F. GREENE, TERM EXPIRED.

GERALD FISHER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE RICHARD A. LEVIE, RETIRED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAMES A. DALEY, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA, TO GRENADA, AND TO SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES.