

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system:

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, since 1965, Medicare has provided seniors guaranteed health benefits and today, close to 50 million Americans who have paid into the system now rely on the program for care. While the program's sustainability is stronger than in recent past, this Congress, like those before it, has an obligation to ensure sustainability of the program for current enrollees and future beneficiaries. The Independent Payment Advisory Board, IPAB, was created with this objective in mind. However, despite best intentions, I believe that IPAB is the wrong approach to achieve this shared goal.

Relinquishing control of Medicare provider reimbursements to an unelected IPAB is problematic to me for a number of reasons. Congress has helped shape a Medicare system that reflects unique care needs of varying demographics as well as differences between regions and states. Further, this system has been developed with transparency and accountability in congressional debates. Implementing IPAB would limit the strengths of the current system, and would continue a trend of ceding congressional authority to the Executive branch. This is, in part, why I cosponsored the Medicare Decisions Accountability Act, H.R. 452, legislation to repeal IPAB.

The fact is that the Affordable Care Act will contain spending growth in the Medicare program—independent of proposed IPAB reforms—through integrated and coordinated care models and modest reimbursement changes. The Congressional Budget Office, CBO, estimates that the law will slow annual Medicare growth from seven to four percent over the next decade. And, over the past year, the S&P has measured the lowest rate of growth in the history of Medicare—below three percent.

Today, the House considered legislation to repeal IPAB, a goal that I support. Unfortunately, a calculated choice to polarize the vote by incorporating the HEALTH Act (H.R. 5)—an unrelated and divisive bill—emphasizes the cynical gamesmanship of Republican leadership who clearly are not interested in forging a partisan coalition to repeal IPAB. The HEALTH Act, in part, limits intentional torts or cases where harm is deliberate. A recent case in Connecticut, which involved victims of sexual assault, underscores the harm in these restrictions. Under H.R. 5, these victims would be denied their day in court.

Over the next ten years, Medicare will cost between \$8 trillion and \$9 trillion and there are a whole host of offsets which would easily counter the costs of IPAB repeal without injecting scorched earth partisan politics. For example, MedPAC has recommended rescinding duplicative bonus payments to private insurance providers that administer Medicare Advantage plans, which have historically been overpaid by 14 percent. At the very least, this option provides a more tempered approach to offset H.R. 452 and build an honest consensus on repealing IPAB.

Despite my long-standing support for the repeal of IPAB, I cannot support H.R. 5 as presented to the House today. It is my sincere hope that this chamber can debate the repeal of IPAB through a more measured, balanced, and reasonable approach in the future.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE RE- TIREMENT OF ROBERT GRACELY FROM GENISYS CREDIT UNION AFTER YEARS OF FINANCIAL SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Robert Gracely on the occasion of his retirement from Genisys Credit Union after more than three decades of dedicated and passionate service to its members and the greater Southeast Michigan community. A member of Genisys since October 1967, his work has been significantly focused on Genisys' role as a steward of the Southeast Michigan community.

Within the varied positions he has served during his time with Genisys Credit Union, Mr. Gracely has been a passionate advocate of its mission as a not-for-profit, member-owned financial institution that has been committed to helping its members since its formation in 1936. Based out of Auburn Hills, Michigan, Genisys is one of the largest credit unions in Michigan and one of the strongest in the country with over \$1.4 billion in assets. Genisys and its members are deeply involved in altruistic work which supports local charities, organizations and events that enrich the lives of many throughout Michigan. These endeavors have earned Genisys and its members not only considerable praise but numerous awards for their commitment to community service and volunteerism.

Throughout his tenure with Genisys, Mr. Gracely's colleagues have routinely praised his exceptional talent for recognizing client needs and recommending the right services. With his focus on building community partnerships, Mr. Gracely has leveraged his leadership within Genisys Credit Union to partner with and support local businesses, which has cultivated a vibrant small business community. Furthermore, Mr. Gracely has been praised for

his ability to work within a team, to work with his staff and to identify issues and find innovative solutions. His strong command of financial issues, dedication to high quality customer service, and focus made him an invaluable asset. Genisys continues to develop its partnerships within the community and could not have been done without the help of Mr. Gracely.

Mr. Speaker, as a leader within Genisys Credit Union Mr. Gracely has done so much to guide it and its members in their philanthropic activities within the communities that Genisys serves. Like so many of his colleagues in senior leadership positions at Genisys, he has worked tirelessly to provide the credit union's members with quality customer service and financial advising. His spirit of collegiality, dedication to his employees and the greater community, and his creativity will be sorely missed. I wish Mr. Gracely many happy years in retirement and I know he will continue to be involved in volunteer efforts here in Southeast Michigan for years to come.

HONORING BLAKE HUDDLESTON

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Blake Huddleston is a senior at Pasadena Memorial High School in Harris County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

The American form of Democracy is built upon the principle that every man has the right to have his voice heard, yet today many Americans revoke this right. Neither Congress nor the President can adequately govern such a vast land and people as the United States without participation in government, which has been declining in recent years due to an increase in American apathy.

Adequate governance does not require petitions, marches, or protest; simply voting for issues and candidates is enough to ensure that the American voice is heard in the white halls of the Capital. But in order to create a sense of honor in participating in our centuries old processes, both those who are in positions of power and those who seek office must offer their constituents something worth speaking for.

In times of discord and partisanship the American people become disillusioned with

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