

my colleagues and friends of Ireland everywhere to read this carefully and to continue to commit themselves to the cause of peace, reconciliation, and economic reconstruction of the island of Ireland, during the critical months and years ahead.

REBUILDING IRELAND'S ECONOMY

(By Paul S. Quinn)

The people of Northern Ireland and the republic of Ireland face a historic choice today when they vote on the peace agreement worked out among the various factions involved in the struggle in the North.

A yes vote is the key to the next steps in the region, but it is only a beginning. Economic growth and stability, shared by Catholic and Protestant alike, is essential to the continued progress of peace in Northern Ireland and the border areas with the republic.

In the 15 years I have traveled there, the North has changed from a place fraught with distrust and violence to one where peace is beginning to take root.

In my recent travels there, I have been struck by two things. The first is the tremendous appreciation that people have for the commitment that President Clinton and his foreign policy team, the U.S. Congress and, of course, former Maine Sen. George Mitchell have made to the search for peace.

But just as striking as their gratitude is their fervent desire to have us remain engaged in the region. They believe, rightly, that in order for the North to truly become a new place, the United States, both our government and our private sector, will have to be part of making that happen.

Since 1986, the United States has put its money where its mouth is in the effort to turn Northern Ireland's economy around. We have done this primarily through our support for the International Fund for Ireland, which has been a tremendous success. Indeed, it is a story that has never really been told. The fund has helped to increase dramatically investment in the region, and more than 28,000 jobs have been created.

There also has been substantial support from the private sector in this country, primarily through the American Ireland Fund, in the areas of direct economic help and sponsorship of educational and training projects.

Unfortunately, more is required to cement the great achievement of the peace agreement. Additional economic commitment is necessary, and much if not most of that has to come from the private sector.

The business community and the governments directly and indirectly involved with the peace process must pick up the challenge made by President Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, reiterated on May 18 to the people of Northern Ireland: There will be increased investment if the peace process continues, and all on the island of Ireland will benefit.

There are some specific steps that can be taken to help achieve this goal of creating jobs and economic opportunity.

There must be continued support for the International Fund for Ireland by our government, as well as the European Union, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and perhaps other concerned governments. The peace agreement does not mean the fund can close up shop.

Hard questions need to be asked sooner rather than later on how to best make use of the \$500 million stimulus package the British government has put together for the North. Clearly, the British government will have its own ideas. But the private sector and others familiar with the region should offer their good offices to help ensure that this money

is well spent and does not get lost in the bureaucracy.

Commerce Secretary William Daley is going to the region in early June with an impressive group of U.S. business executives. This visit is very timely and important, and an assessment by Mr. Daley and his team can provide a blueprint for the kind of private investment that is both needed and achievable during the critical days ahead.

There should be an economic conference in the region soon. The 1996 White House conference in Washington on Ireland laid a foundation for what could be done to help Northern Ireland. Using the results of that conference as a starting point, a regionally based conference could help move ideas to action. A comprehensive plan needs to be developed and implemented without delay.

For its part, the U.S. government may want to see if there is more it can do to help strengthen the economy of the region by spurring private-sector involvement.

It is clear that, regardless of the nature and extent of government assistance provided to Northern Ireland, at the end of the day it is the ability to attract and retain private investment that will matter most.

Men and women of goodwill have worked very hard to get the various factions in Northern Ireland to the point where peace is possible. This effort should now be matched by the efforts of the private sector.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

HON. JAY W. JOHNSON

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor National Missing Children's Day on Monday, May 25, to remember the girls and boys for whom we search, and to pay my respect to the mothers and fathers across Northeast Wisconsin—parents like Phyllis Makowski of Marinette, Wisconsin—and across the country who know the suffering that comes with a missing child.

Before I was elected to Congress, I reported the news every night to the people of Northeast Wisconsin. We reported on every story imaginable, but it was the stories of families who were searching for loved ones that I will never forget. Whether it was 12-year-old Cora Jones from Appleton, or Lauri Depies of Menasha, the emotions were heart-wrenching and the events were tragic. I had the opportunity many times to speak with the mothers and fathers as they searched for their missing children—I will always remember the trauma and the despair they were subjected to.

That is why Jay Breyer and Kim Maas from "Youth Educated in Safety," or "Y.E.S.," came to visit with me in Washington to tell me about a loophole in the law that was hindering the search for missing children, they had my immediate attention. Because I know the pain dealt to the families and the entire community, when a child is missing and there are no answers, only questions.

That meeting led to the introduction of new legislation by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON), the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and myself. We call the bill, "Jennifer's Law," named in honor of Jennifer Wilmer, who has been missing since 1993, and whose mother, Susan, has fought so hard

to help other families in this terrible situation. "Jennifer's Law" is aimed at helping the families of missing persons bring closure to their search, and giving the police more information to solve crimes.

Right now, we have a national crime information center (NCIC) database of missing persons. We also have a separate list of unidentified persons. But, tragically, these lists cannot be adequately cross-referenced.

We believe there are thousands of unidentified persons found every year, deceased or living (perhaps with amnesia), who are not reported in a way that will help us close cases where people are missing.

It is reported that New York City alone buries as many as 3,000 unclaimed bodies every year. But these aren't just bodies. They are real lives.

But imagine that for every body found is a family hoping for clues . . . searching . . . waiting for an answer. Also imagine that for every unclaimed, unidentified body may be clues about a criminal who may never be caught.

Our bill, "Jennifer's Law," would enhance the reporting of information about unidentified persons. It would require states to report to the missing persons file any information on unidentified persons they find in their jurisdiction. The legislation also requires the FBI to modernize the missing persons file and the unidentified persons file to make these lists compatible for cross-referencing.

By improving the ability of the FBI to cross-reference the national missing persons file with an enhanced unidentified persons file, many families will find the closure they need as they search for missing children, husbands, wives, and other family members. Also, we expect that better information about these unidentified bodies—dental records, fingerprints, and x-rays—would bring many clues to help track down predators and criminals.

A logical and complete cross-referencing of the missing persons file and the unidentified persons file simply does not exist right now. But it will.

Families who are searching for loved ones deserve our best effort and the right answers. We should use every resource at our disposal to help these families and track down criminals. On National Missing Children's Day, I want to encourage my colleagues to lend their support to this worthy legislation for families of missing children who need our help.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN DAY

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, May 25th is National Missing Children's Day. As Chairman of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus, I'd like to speak for a moment about HR 2850, "The Jennifer's Law Act of 1997," which would help ensure that parents are able to bring closure to their search for missing children. I introduced this bill in November with my colleagues, Congressman JAY JOHNSON and Congressman TOM LANTOS.

Under current law, states are required to report information on missing children to the FBI

so that data can be entered into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) Missing Person File. However, states are not required to report information to the NCIC's Unidentified Person File when they recover an unidentified body. Unfortunately, a logical and complete cross-referencing of the Missing Person File and the Unidentified Person File simply does not exist.***STRPGFIT***

Every week, unidentified deceased children are found, yet their families may never know and may never stop their difficult search. The families are denied the sense of closure to their tragic loss, at least knowing that their child was no longer missing. In late December, the body of GiGi Arnett Harris was found in a morgue, where it had lain unidentified for two years. Stories like that of Ms. Harris would not occur if Jennifer's Law is enacted.

Jennifer's Law would correct this problem by requiring that states report to the NCIC information on unidentified persons that they find in their jurisdiction. It would also require that the FBI modernize the Missing Persons File and the Unidentified Persons File to make the lists compatible for cross-referencing.

Its time to bring comfort to families of missing children in their suffering. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this very important legislation.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to speak out in favor of an extremely worthwhile and important piece of legislation—H.R. 2850, the Jennifer's Law Act.***STRPGFIT***

This bill would require states to report missing children information to the National Crime Information Center so that it can be entered into a missing person database. Missing person files are already sent to the FBI and, as we all know, two heads, or two agencies in this case, are better than one when it comes to finding missing and abducted kids.

In my congressional district alone, 68 missing children have been reported since 1994. Typically, these children are illegally abducted by a family member or a stranger, run away from home, or became lost. Thankfully, the vast majority of the children in my area were found, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. However, 5 children are still missing, and that is 5 kids too many.

Congress needs to do everything possible to find these five youngsters, as well as thou-

sands of others from around the country. I urge my colleagues to support Jennifer's Law Act to enhance federal and state authorities access to data that may reunite families with their missing children.

STARK RELEASES MEMO FROM MEDICARE ACTUARIES, SHOWS WE CAN SAVE MEDICARE WITHOUT RADICAL SURGERY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, in response to a number of questions I submitted last fall, I have received the following memo from the Office of the Chief Actuary of the Medicare agency.***STRPGFIT***

I asked what effect various options for spending restraints or increased revenues would have on the long-term outlook for the Medicare Trust Fund. The Actuary's memo makes it clear that we can solve Medicare's long-term problems without radical change.

A lot of politicians and editorial writers cry that the sky is falling because of the coming retirement of the Baby Boom generation. The Actuaries show that with a variety of reasonable changes, Medicare will be there for our children and grandchildren.

The memo shows that with reasonable controls on hospitals and doctor inflation and very small tax changes, we can easily solve Medicare's financial problems between now and 2022, and solve more than half the 1998—2072 problem. For example, a three year freeze on hospital payment inflation would cut the short-term problem in half and the 75 year budget shortfall by one-quarter. A freeze is doable, because the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee (MedPAC) reports that at current rates, in 2003 hospital Medicare payment profits are likely to be about 15%—far more than we should be paying.

As another alternative, if we donated half the tobacco settlement to the Medicare Trust Fund and saved the next decade's budget surpluses for Medicare, we would keep the Hospital Trust Fund solvent way past 2020.

We don't need tax increases. If we just save the pending surpluses for Medicare, instead of dribbling them away, we can solve Medicare's problems over the next twenty years.

A proposal to hold Hospital Trust Fund spending to the growth in the Medicare population plus the per capita growth in Gross Domestic Product, would solve half the long-term financial problems of the Trust Fund. Holding health inflation to this level will be tough, unless private sector health inflation is held to similar levels—but we should try. The fat and

waste in the health care system is extraordinary, and we should make this our goal.

The Office of Actuary estimates also show that the Stark-Moynihan Medicare Early Access bill (HR 3470, 3471) allowing people to buy into Medicare as early as age 55 would be revenue neutral over the next 25 years and then actually improve the Trust Fund because of the bill's anti-fraud provisions.

People who want to abolish Medicare and privatize all government programs are trying to scare Americans into believing Medicare can't be saved. Take a look at these budget estimates: these are reasonable changes that we can and should make. With additional savings we should even be able to improve the existing program to provide a pharmaceutical benefit.***STRPGFIT***

MEMORANDUM,

May 15, 1998.

From: Sol Mussey, Director, Medicare and Medicaid Cost Estimates Group, Office of the Actuary, HCFA

Subject: Estimated Long-Range Financial Impact of Selected HI Proposals

The attached table provides estimates for several proposals designed to help reduce the Hospital Insurance (HI) program's long-range actuarial deficit. The attached table provides the 25-year, 50-year, and 75-year impacts on the actuarial balance, together with the resulting balances themselves.

The attached is based on the 1998 Trustees Report, intermediate assumptions, and consequently include the effects of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Each line of the table represents the actuarial balances under current law modified for that particular proposed only. No request was made at this time for any combination of proposals. In practice, the financial impact of a legislative package made up of several of these proposals would not necessarily equal the sum of the individual impacts, due to potential interactions among provisions.

The estimates shown for the age 62 buy-in proposal are based on the proposal in the President's 1999 Budget. Since the proposal in the short run is to be financed by other savings proposals in the budget, we included the effects of these other proposals. Hence, the 25-year effect on the actuarial balance is zero. However, the buy-in proposal becomes self-financing after about 20 years and the savings from the other proposals in the budget are assumed to continue. Therefore, there is some positive effect on the actuarial balance for the 50- and 75-year projection periods. The center of excellence proposal is also included in the President's 1999 Budget.

As is always the case with long-range financial estimates, the impacts shown for the attached proposals are subject to considerable uncertainty. Actual future effects could differ substantially from these estimates.

SOL MUSSEY, ASA,

Director, Medicare and Medicaid Cost Estimates Group.

ESTIMATED LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF SELECTED HI PROPOSALS

(Expressed as a percent of HI taxable payroll)

	Change in actuarial balance ¹			Actuarial balance of HI trust fund		
	25-yr period (1998-2022)	50-yr period (1998-2047)	75-yr period (1998-2072)	25-yr period (1998-2022)	50-yr period (1998-2047)	75-yr period (1998-2072)
Current law				-0.73	-1.61	-2.10
Proposal:						
Hold HI growth to increase in enrollment +GDP/capita	0.31	0.77	1.06	-0.42	-0.84	-1.04
Reinstitute and expand Center of Excellence programs eff. 1/1/00 ²	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.73	-1.61	-2.10
Hospital PPS freeze 2000-2002	0.35	0.48	0.55	-0.38	-1.13	-1.55
Buy-in at 62	0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.73	-1.60	-2.09
Increase HI tax rate to 3.2% from 2.9%	0.25	0.28	0.28	-0.48	-1.33	-1.82
Donate half tobacco settlement to HI fund ³	0.10	0.10	0.10	-0.63	-1.51	-2.00

¹ Positive figures represent an improvement in the actuarial balance, reflecting either a reduction in expenditures or an increase in revenues. ² Included in the President's 1999 Budget. ³ We used 10-year estimates provided by the Joint Committee on Taxation and extrapolated them in the long-range.

Note: Estimates are based on the intermediate set of assumptions from the 1998 Trustees Report. Office of the Actuary, Health Care Financing Administration, 15-May-98.