

Native people have lived in the Kobuk Valley for at least 12,500 years. This human use is best recorded at the extensive archeological sites at Onion Portage. The Kobuk Valley remains an important area for traditional subsistence harvest of caribou, moose, bears, fish, waterfowl, and many edible and medicinal plants. The slow-moving, gentle Kobuk River is tremendous for fishing and canoeing or kayaking.

Noatak National Preserve lies in northwestern Alaska, in the western Brooks Range, and encompasses more than 250 miles of the Noatak River. The preserve protects the largest untouched mountain-ringed river basin in the United States. The river basin provides an outstanding resource for scientific research, environmental education, and subsistence and recreational opportunities.

Above the Arctic Circle, the Noatak River flows from glacial melt atop Mount Igikpak in the Brooks Range out to Kotzebue Sound. Along its 425-mile course, the river has carved out the Grand Canyon of the Noatak. The preserve is in a transition zone between the northern coniferous forests and tundra biomes. The river basin contains most types of arctic habitat, as well as one of the finest arrays of flora and fauna. Among the Preserve's large mammals are brown bears, moose, caribou, wolves, lynx, and Dall sheep. Birdlife also is plentiful in the area because of the migrations from Asia and the tip of South America. The Noatak River supports arctic char, whitefish, grayling, and salmon and is an important resource for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

Mr. President, these are the human and natural resources of Northwest Alaska. This legislation will direct the Secretary to finally bring the two together for the benefit of both Alaska Natives and the nation.●

By Mr. ROTH (for himself and Mr. MOYNIHAN):

S. 2616. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make revisions in the per beneficiary and per visit payment limits on payment for health services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

HEALTH SERVICES LEGISLATION

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my distinguished Chairman, Senator ROTH, and other colleagues in introducing a bill to improve the home health interim payment system.

Prior to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA), home health agencies were reimbursed on a cost basis for all their costs, as long as they maintained average costs below certain limits. That payment system provided incentives for home health agencies to increase the volume of services delivered to patients, and it attracted many new agencies to the program. From 1989 to 1996, Medicare home health payments grew at an average annual rate of 33 percent, while the number of home

health agencies increased from about 5,700 in 1989 to more than 10,000 in 1997.

In order to constrain the growth in costs and usage of home care, the BBA included provisions that would establish a Prospective Payment System (PPS) for home health care, a method of paying health care providers whereby rates are established in advance. An interim payment system (IPS) was also established while the Health Care Financing Administration works to develop the PPS for home health care agencies.

The home health care industry is dissatisfied with the IPS. The resulting concern expressed by many Members of Congress prompted us to ask the General Accounting Office (GAO) to examine the question of beneficiary access to home care. While the GAO found that neither agency closures nor the interim payment system significantly affected beneficiary access to care, I remain concerned that the potential closure of many more home health agencies might ultimately affect the care that beneficiaries receive, particularly beneficiaries with chronic illness.

The bill we are introducing today adjusts the interim payment system to achieve equity and fairness in payments to home health agencies. It would reduce extreme variations in payment limits applicable to old agencies within states and across states and would reduce artificial payment level differences between "old" and "new" agencies. The bill would provide all agencies a longer transition period in which to adjust to changed payment limits.

Clearly, since the bill may not address all the concerns raised by Medicare beneficiaries and by home health agencies, we should revisit this issue next year. A thorough review is needed to determine whether the funding mechanism for home health is sufficient, fair and appropriate, and whether the benefit is meeting the needs of Medicare beneficiaries.

America's home health agencies provide invaluable services that have given many Medicare beneficiaries the ability to stay home while receiving medical care. An adjustment to the interim payment system and delay in further payment reductions will enable home health agencies to survive the transition into the prospective payment system while continuing to provide essential care for beneficiaries.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 35

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 35, a bill to amend the Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 to clarify the acreage limitations and incorporate a means test for certain farm operations, and for other purposes.

S. 1459

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

COLLINS) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. WELLSTONE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1459, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a 5-year extension of the credit for producing electricity from wind and closed-loop biomass.

S. 1557

At the request of Mr. TORRICELLI, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1557, a bill to end the use of steel jaw leghold traps on animals in the United States.

S. 1855

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1855, a bill to require the Occupational safety and Health Administration to recognize that electronic forms of providing MSDSs provide the same level of access to information as paper copies.

S. 1868

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1868, a bill to express United States foreign policy with respect to, and to strengthen United States advocacy on behalf of, individuals persecuted for their faith worldwide; to authorize United States actions in response to religious persecution worldwide; to establish an Ambassador at Large on International Religious Freedom within the Department of State, a Commission on International Religious Persecution, and a Special Adviser on International Religious Freedom within the National Security Council; and for other purposes.

S. 2024

At the request of Mr. ASHCROFT, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. THURMOND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2024, a bill to increase the penalties for trafficking in methamphetamine in order to equalize those penalties with the penalties for trafficking in crack cocaine.

S. 2078

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mr. GORTON), the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAU) were added as cosponsors of S. 2078, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for Farm and Ranch Risk Management Accounts, and for other purposes.

S. 2110

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2110, a bill to authorize the Federal programs to prevent violence against women, and for other purposes.

S. 2182

At the request of Mr. GORTON, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2182, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax-exempt bond financing of certain electric facilities.

S. 2190

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2190, a bill to authorize qualified organizations to provide technical assistance and capacity building services to microenterprise development organizations and programs and to disadvantaged entrepreneurs using funds from the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2213

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. ABRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2213, a bill to allow all States to participate in activities under the Education Flexibility Partnership Demonstration Act.

S. 2292

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2292, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the medicare program of insulin pumps as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 2295

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2295, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to extend the authorizations of appropriations for that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2412

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2412, a bill to create employment opportunities and to promote economic growth establishing a public-private partnership between the United States travel and tourism industry and every level of government to work to make the United States the premiere travel and tourism destination in the world, and for other purposes.

S. 2494

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. ROTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2494, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.) to enhance the ability of direct broadcast satellite and other multichannel video providers to compete effectively with cable television systems, and for other purposes.

S. 2562

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) were added as cosponsors of S. 2562, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend for 6 months the contracts of certain managed care organizations under the medicare program.

S. 2563

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Missouri

(Mr. BOND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2563, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to restore military retirement benefits that were reduced by the Military Retirement Reform Act of 1986.

S. 2565

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. FAIRCLOTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2565, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the circumstances in which a substance is considered to be a pesticide chemical for purposes of such Act, and for other purposes.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 56

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. KEMPTHORNE), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of Senate Joint Resolution 56, a joint resolution expressing the sense of Congress in support of the existing Federal legal process for determining the safety and efficacy of drugs, including marijuana and other Schedule I drugs, for medicinal use.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 124

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. ASHCROFT) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of Senate Concurrent Resolution 124, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the denial of benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences to developing countries that violate the intellectual property rights of United States persons, particularly those that have not implemented their obligations under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 125

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 125, a concurrent resolution expressing the opposition of Congress to any deployment of United States ground forces in Kosovo, a province in southern Serbia, for peacemaking or peacekeeping purposes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 199

At the request of Mr. TORRICELLI, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. KERREY) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 199, a resolution designating the last week of April of each calendar year as "National Youth Fitness Week."

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 127—RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. MACK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 127

Whereas November 1998 marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of the National Microbiological Institute (referred to in this resolution as the "Institute") under authority of section 202 of the Public Health Service Act;

Whereas the Institute was formed through the combination of the Rocky Mountain Laboratory, the Biologics Control Laboratory, the Division of Infectious Diseases and the Division of Tropical Diseases of the National Institutes of Health;

Whereas in 1955 Congress renamed the Institute as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (referred to in this resolution as "NIAID") under the authority of the Omnibus Medical Research Act, recognizing the need for a coordinated scientific research program on infectious, allergic and immunologic diseases;

Whereas the research portfolio of NIAID encompasses infectious diseases such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, malaria and influenza, immunologic diseases including asthma, allergies and primary immune deficiency diseases, transplantation immunology, and development of new diagnostic therapies and vaccines for infectious diseases;

Whereas research supported by NIAID continues to yield promising advances including the development of vaccines against the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and in the identification of effective treatment regimens for childhood asthma;

Whereas the continued threat of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, like tuberculosis, poses a risk to the health worldwide, NIAID-supported research provides the necessary tools to develop diagnostic tests, new and improved treatments, vaccines and other means to combat the microbial threats of today and those of the future;

Whereas NIAID-supported research is making significant progress in understanding the immune system and its disorders including the mechanisms of immune tolerance, which refers to the ability of the immune system to distinguish between cells and tissues that are "self" and those that are foreign or "non-self," such as a pathogen, tumor, or transplanted organ;

Whereas such advances are vital to the field of organ transplantation and may prove useful in treating autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis;

Whereas Congress intends that NIAID continue its innovative leadership in delineating pathogenesis, improving diagnosis and treatment, and developing vaccines to prevent infectious and immunologic diseases, thereby contributing to the overall health of the American public and the people of the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that Congress—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Microbiological Institute and the creation of the Institute that became the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases;