

Senior Prescription Insurance Coverage Equity Act. It is voluntary in nature. Nobody is required to change anything. No senior, no family, would be required to change anything in their buying practices should they choose to continue doing exactly what they are doing. But for millions of older people, the SPICE Program, the Senior Prescription Insurance Coverage Equity Act, will be a bargain. It will be a winner because it will give seniors the kind of bargaining power the big health maintenance organizations have had.

It is not right, in my view, to give those buyers significant power in the marketplace and just say seniors and families do not matter. In effect, that is what we are doing. We are telling them: You go on out and do your best, walk into a pharmacy, and even though you are subsidizing the big buyers, this Senate will not do anything about it.

I believe it is time for bipartisan action on this. I believe it is time to create an approach to cover prescription drugs under Medicare that uses the forces of the marketplace, that is bipartisan, and that helps hold costs down. I believe a lot of seniors cannot afford their prescriptions. There is a right way and a wrong way to deal with it. The bipartisan Snowe-Wyden legislation is what we think is the appropriate way to go. We are going to continue to come to this floor and talk about the need for action on it.

As this poster says, what will help is if seniors send in copies of their prescription drug bills. We urge seniors to send them to us and send them to their Senator here in the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, because that will help Members of the Senate to see how urgent this is need.

The need was great years ago, but it is getting even greater. Too many older people every week are having to make a choice between their food costs and their fuel costs and their fuel costs and their medical bills. Let us show we can deliver on this important issue. There is a bipartisan bill now before the Senate. We hope seniors, as this poster says, will be in touch with us to let us know their feelings on this important matter.

I intend to keep coming back to the floor of the Senate until we get action on this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NURSING RELIEF FOR DISADVANTAGED AREAS ACT OF 1999

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, on October 22, the Senate passed by unanimous

consent the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Act of 1999. The Senate agreed, also by unanimous consent, to an amendment of mine added to that legislation. My amendment made a technical clarification to the L visa program. Unfortunately, an "Interpretation of Technical Amendment" at the end of my remarks on my amendment was inadvertently left out of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I ask unanimous consent it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

INTERPRETATION OF TECHNICAL AMENDMENT

"Collective" and "collectively" refer to a relationship between the accounting and management consulting firms or the elected members (partners, shareholders, members, employees) of the various accounting and management consulting firms, inclusive of both accounting service firms and management consulting service firms or the elected members (partners, shareholders, members, employees) thereof.

An entity shall be considered to be "marketing its services under the same internationally recognized name directly or indirectly under an agreement" if it engages in a trade or business and markets its trade or business under the same internationally recognized name and one of the following direct or indirect relationships apply to the entity:

(a) It has an agreement with the worldwide coordinating organization, or

(b) It is a parent, branch, subsidiary or affiliate relationship to an entity which has an agreement with a qualifying worldwide coordinating organization, or

(c) It is majority owned by members of such entity with an agreement and/or the members of its parent, subsidiary or affiliate entities, or

(d) It is indirectly party to one or more agreements connecting it to the worldwide coordinating organization, as shown by facts and circumstances.

This provision is intended to provide the basis of continued L visa program eligibility for those worldwide coordinating organizations which may in the future divide or spin-off parallel business units which may independently plan to associate with a non-collective worldwide coordinating organization.

CLOTURE VOTE ON H.R. 434

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I regret that because of a long-standing commitment, I will not be here for tomorrow's vote on cloture on H.R. 434, The Sub-Saharan Africa Free Trade Act. If I could be here, I would vote against cloture.

I strongly oppose the majority leader's decision to fill the amendment tree to prevent us from offering amendments on some of the most important issues facing working families in this country, especially the minimum wage.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has said numerous times that increased trade has raised the standards of living and the quality of life for almost all countries involved in trade, and especially the quality of life in our own country. Chairman Greenspan believes that the number one benefit of trade is not simply jobs, but enhanced standards of living.

I can think of no more important enhancement to the standard of living of America's hardest pressed working families than to increase the minimum wage. Surely, it is appropriate to send the message on this legislation that increased trade must definitely mean a better quality of life for the working poor.

I had hoped to offer an amendment to raise the minimum wage to this bill, but the majority leader's actions prevent me from doing that. This trade bill has been offered to enhance the standards of living for workers in Africa and the Caribbean. I am certainly in favor of that, but there are honest disagreements as to whether the proposal before us effectively does so. But, while we express our concern for workers in these nations, we cannot forget about the workers in our own country.

I commend President Clinton for making trade with Africa a priority for his administration. His leadership is the driving force behind this entire debate. As the Senate debates trade with Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean region, we must ensure that we take the right approach to building these vital partnerships. Clearly, we must strengthen our economic ties with these nations, but I am not convinced the proposal before us is the best way to do so.

Unfortunately, the majority leader's actions have also prevented anyone on this side of the aisle from offering germane amendments that will help us to build lasting partnerships between African and American businesses, provide strong protections for workers rights, and preserve the environment. We clearly had an opportunity to enact a bill that would make trade with Africa and the Caribbean Basin countries a win-win for all of the nations involved, but the majority leader's actions have made that impossible.

Any bill on Africa that comes before the Senate should address both trade and the other important issues facing Africa today. It must deal with the AIDS crisis. It must offer substantial debt relief. And it must restore foreign aid. Yet the proposal currently before the Senate is silent on these fundamental issues facing Africa. I am pleased that Senator FEINGOLD, Senator DURBIN, and other Senators are prepared to offer amendments that address all of these concerns, and I strongly support them.

I am also very concerned about the impact of the pending bill on our textile and apparel industries, which are often hardest hit by imports. These industries remain a critical source of employment for many American workers. In Massachusetts, many textile and apparel employees live in the Merrimack Valley and in Southeastern Massachusetts. They work hard, and they have made a lasting impact on our state's history and culture.