

Veterans earning just over \$9,000—which is well below the poverty threshold, are required to make prescription copayments. These copayments place an enormous financial burden on our poorest veterans. To compound this problem, earlier this year, the Department of Veterans Affairs increased the copayment for prescription drugs from \$2 to \$7 per 30-day prescription.

Most of the veterans who will benefit from this provision are older, are on fixed incomes, and are on many different medications, each requiring a separate copayment. Most of them have no health insurance except for Medicare and so they must depend upon the VA for their medications. With the lack of a Medicare drug benefit, these veterans are now faced with a 350 percent increase in what they must pay for life-sustaining medications.

Imagine the situation of a veteran with an income of about \$10,000 a year who takes ten medications a month and it is not at all unusual for an elderly person to take that many medications. With the increase in the prescription copayment rate, that veteran now has to allocate over 8 percent of this annual income just to pay for prescription drugs. And although the \$7 per prescription charge may seem like an insignificant amount to some, I can assure my colleagues that to the veteran and his family living on a very limited income, it is quite significant.

Of particular note, S. 2043 also contains mental health care provisions—a key element of caring for those who have served on the battlefield—that would ensure currently successful programs across the country continue to get necessary funding. Congress previously enacted a provision to designate \$15 million in VA funding specifically to help medical facilities improve care for veterans with substance abuse disorders and PTSD. The funds for these mental health grant programs, mandated by the Veterans Millennium Benefits and Health Care Act of 1999, will soon revert to a general fund.

Despite the slow start, this funding has already increased the PTSD and substance abuse disorder treatment programs available to veterans. More than 100 staff have been hired in 18 of VA's 21 service networks to treat substance abuse disorders. Nine new programs—in Baltimore, Maryland; Atlanta, Georgia; San Francisco, California; and Dayton, Ohio among others—have initiated or intensified opioid substitution programs for veterans who have not responded well to drug-free treatment regimens. Other new programs, such as those in Tampa, FL; Cincinnati, OH; Columbia, MO; and Loma Linda, CA put special emphasis on treating veterans with more complex conditions that include PTSD and substance abuse. The additional funding has enabled VA to develop better outpatient substance abuse and PTSD treatment programs, outpatient dual-

diagnosis programs, more PTSD community clinical teams, and more residential substance abuse disorder rehabilitation programs. The legislation being blocked in the Senate would ensure that this funding remained “protected” for three more years, and would increase the total amount of funding identified specifically for treatment of substance abuse disorders and PTSD from \$15 million to \$25 million.

Additionally, the bill contains authorization for four construction projects. Two of these projects are much-needed seismic corrections for VA Medical Centers in the state of California. I think all of my colleagues would agree that no veteran should ever be endangered by aging infrastructure while in the care of VA should a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, occur. I thank Senator BOXER for her leadership on the construction issue. The remaining two construction projects in S. 2043 are for nursing homes. One of these homes is in Beckley, WV, of which the design plans have already been made. I am proud to be involved in helping to bring a long-term care facility to the veterans of my home State who have been in need of such a home for quite some time now. The other nursing home project is in Lebanon, PA.

S. 2043 would also fix a longstanding problem faced by VA's retired nurses. Last December, Congress passed the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001. Enacted as Public Law 107-135, this legislation gave VA several tools to respond to the looming nurse crisis. In addition, it altered how part-time service performed by certain title 38 employees would be considered when granting retirement credit.

Previously, the law required that title 38 employees' part-time services prior to April 7, 1986, be prorated when calculating retirement annuities, resulting in lower annuities for these employees. Section 132 of the VA Health Programs Enhancement Act was intended to exempt all previously retired registered nurses, physician assistants, and expanded-function dental auxiliaries from this requirement. However, the Office of Personnel Management has interpreted this provision to only apply to those health care professionals who retire after its enactment date.

The legislation being blocked in the Senate would require OPM to comply with the original intent of the VA Health Programs Enhancement Act, and therefore to recalculate the annuities for these retired health care professionals. This clarification would not extend retirement benefits retroactively to the date of retirement, but would ensure that annuities are calculated fairly from now on for eligible employees who retired between April 7, 1986, and January 23, 2002.

Mr. President, the legislation would also provide transfer rights for hourly

rate Veterans Canteen Service, VCS, employees to title 5 VA positions through internal competitive procedures. VCS hourly employees are federal employees hired under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 7802. While this authority provides many of the same benefits that title 5 federal employees enjoy, (i.e., workers compensation, health benefits, retirement, and veterans preference) there are benefits to which they are not entitled. For example, VCS hourly employees do not have the same transfer rights to other VA positions that VCS managers have.

As a result, VCS hourly employees applying for VA food service positions, VA housekeeping positions, and other VA positions—positions for which they are well qualified—are not treated as internal competitive service candidates. Their years of service are irrelevant, as they cannot easily transfer to another job at VA without first going through civil service competitions. This legislation would change that and allow them to compete equally with other VA candidates. I wish to thank the American Federation of Government Employees for bringing this issue to my attention and for the assistance and leadership that they provided.

S. 2043 will help thousands of veterans across America, in a variety of ways. We cannot turn our backs on those who have sacrificed so much for this country. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2001, the Secretary of the Senate, on October 23, 2002, during the recess of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1210. An act to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996.

S. 1227. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area in the State of New York, and for other purposes.

S. 1270. An act to designate the United States courthouse to be constructed at 8th Avenue and Mill Street in Eugene, Oregon, as the “Wayne Lyman Morse United States Courthouse.”

S. 1533. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and strengthen the health centers program and the National Health Service Corps, and to establish the Healthy Communities Access Program, which will help coordinate services for the uninsured and underinsured, and for other purposes.

S. 1646. An act to identify certain routes in the States of Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and New Mexico as part of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, a high priority corridor on the National Highway System.

S. 2690. An act to reaffirm the references to one Nation under God in the Pledge of Allegiance.

H.R. 2215. An act to authorize appropriations for the Department of Justice for fiscal year 2002, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2486. An act to authorize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through the United States Weather Research Program, to conduct research and development, training, and outreach activities relating to inland flood forecasting improvement, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3253. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance emergency preparedness of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4015. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise and improve employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4967. An act to establish new non-immigrant classes for border commuter students.

H.R. 5542. An act to consolidate all black lung benefit responsibility under a single official, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5596. An act to amend section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to eliminate notification and return requirements for State and local party committees and candidate committees and avoid duplicate reporting by certain State and local political committees of information required to be reported and made publicly available under State law, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5647. An act to authorize the duration of the base contract of the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet contract to be more than five years but not more than seven years.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2001, the enrolled bills were signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD) on October 23, 2002.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Under the authority of the Order of the Senate of January 3, 2001, the Secretary of the Senate, on October 25, 2002, during the recess of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 669. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 127 Social Street in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, as the "Alphonse F. Auclair Post Office Building."

H.R. 670. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7 Commercial Street in Newport, Rhode Island, as the "Bruce F. Cotta Post Office Building."

H.R. 2245. An act for relief of Anisha Goveas Foti.

H.R. 2733. An act to authorize the National Institute of Standards and Technology to work with major manufacturing industries on an initiative of standards development and implementation for electronic enterprise integration.

H.R. 3034. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 89 River Street in Hoboken, New Jersey, as the "Frank Sinatra Post Office Building."

H.R. 3656. An act to amend the International Organizations Immunities Act to provide for the applicability of that Act to the European Central Bank.

H.R. 3738. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1299 North 7th Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as the "Herbert Arlene Post Office Building."

H.R. 3739. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6150 North Broad Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as the "Rev. Leon Sullivan Post Office Building."

H.R. 3740. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 925 Dickinson Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as the "William V. Cibotti Post Office Building."

H.R. 3801. An act to provide for improvement of Federal education research, statistics, evaluation, information, and dissemination, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4013. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish an Office of Rare Diseases at the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4014. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the development of products for rare diseases.

H.R. 4102. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 North Maine Street in Fallon, Nevada, as the "Rollan D. Melton Post Office Building."

H.R. 4685. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to expand the types of Federal agencies that are required to prepare audited financial statements.

H.R. 4717. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1199 Pasadena Boulevard in Pasadena, Texas, as the "Jim Fonteno Post Office Building."

H.R. 4755. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 204 South Broad Street in Lancaster, Ohio, as the "Clarence Miller Post Office Building."

H.R. 4794. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1895 Avenida Del Oro in Oceanside, California as the "Ronald C. Packard Post Office Building."

H.R. 4797. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 265 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California, as the "Nat King Cole Post Office."

H.R. 4851. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6910 South Yorktown Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the "Robert Wayne Jenkins Station."

H.R. 5200. An act to establish wilderness areas, promote conservation, improve public land, and provide for high quality development in Clark County, Nevada, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5205. An act to amend the District of Columbia Retirement Protection Act of 1997 to permit the Secretary of the Treasury to use estimated amounts in determining the service longevity component of the Federal benefit payment required to be paid under such Act to certain retirees of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia.

H.R. 5308. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 301 South Howes Street in Fort Collins, Colorado, as the "Barney Apodaca Post Office."

H.R. 5333. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4 East Central Street in Worcester, Massachusetts, as the "Joseph D. Early Post Office Building."

H.R. 5336. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 380 Main Street in Farmingdale, New York, as the "Peter J. Ganci, Jr. Post Office Building."

H.R. 5340. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5805 White Oak Avenue in Encino, Cali-

fornia, as the "Francis Dayle 'Chick' Hearn Post Office."

H.R. 5574. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 206 South Main Street in Glennville, Georgia, as the "Michael Lee Woodcock Post Office."

H.R. 5651. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to make improvements in the regulation of medical devices, and for other purposes.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2001, the enrolled bills were signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD) on October 25, 2002.

ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on October 23, 2002, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills:

S. 1227. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area in the State of New York, and for other purposes.

S. 1270. An act to designate the United States courthouse to be constructed at 8th Avenue and Mill Street in Eugene, Oregon, as the "Wayne Lyman Morse United States Courthouse."

S. 1533. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and strengthen the health centers program and the National Health Service Corps, and to establish the Healthy Communities Access Program, which will help coordinate services for the uninsured and underinsured, and for other purposes.

S. 1646. An act to identify certain routes in the State of Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and New Mexico as part of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, a high priority corridor on the National Highway System.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated.

By Mr. DAYTON (for himself, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. LOTT, Mr. REID, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BOND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BREAUX, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BURNS, Mr. BYRD, Mr. CAMPBELL, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CARNAHAN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. CLELAND, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FITZGERALD, Mr. FRIST, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRAMM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELMS, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. INOUE, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr.