

representing us at every level of the justice system. He was a determined, an experienced, and a knowledgeable attorney. His accidental and untimely death shall be regretted by all the people of California as well as those that he worked with. We mourn him, but we salute him as a lawyer who represented us at the highest level of performance. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

□ 1630

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003, THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE CLARIFICATION ACT OF 2003, AND THE ENERGY AND SCIENCE RESEARCH INVESTMENT ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce three bills that address issues affecting our health care system, our workplace, and the future of science research in the United States.

Topping our agenda as we begin this first day of the 108th Congress are the serious challenges facing our Medicare system: enacting a prescription drug benefit for seniors and providing fair and adequate reimbursement for physicians, hospitals, and care facilities in my home State of Illinois and across the Nation.

So the first bill that I introduce today is one that will make it easier to provide this funding by cracking down on the waste, fraud, and abuse that drain more than \$12 billion a year from the Medicare system.

The Medicare Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Act of 2003 will put an end to that theft. It will strengthen the Medicare enrollment process, expand certain standards of participation, and reduce erroneous payments. Perhaps most importantly, it gives criminal investigators at the Department of Health and Human Services the Federal law enforcement tools to help them pursue and prosecute health care swindlers.

The time to modernize Medicare is not next week, not next month or next year; the time is now. But true reform will not be achieved without first protecting Medicare from fraud and scandalous exploitation.

The second bill I introduce today, the Family and Medical Leave Clarification Act of 2003, will make a good act work even better for our Nation's

workers and employers. What do I mean by that? Well, since its enactment in 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act, or FMLA, has brought peace of mind and job security during critical times to thousands of workers and their families. That is a good thing. But along with this good thing has come the bad: conflict with existing workplace policies, misinterpretations, and misapplications of the law, intrusions into the privacy of employees, and other consequences that were never anticipated or intended by Congress. While none of us would say that FMLA is broken, all of us, employees and employers alike, must recognize that it should be fixed.

How will my bill fix the unintended and unwanted consequences of FMLA?

First, it clarifies what is now regarded as a confusing definition of a "serious health condition."

Second, it allows for employees to request leave time in blocks of at least 4 hours so that they have enough time to take care of their business without feeling rushed to return to the office. At the same time, it cuts down on the paperwork that employers must process and the intrusive questions they must ask employees before granting leave.

Third, it allows employers to require employees to choose whether to take unpaid leave under FMLA or a paid leave of absence under a collective bargaining agreement. It provides an incentive for employers who offer sick leave to continue to do so while providing a disincentive for those who are considering termination of such employee friendly plans.

The FMLA Clarification Act is a reasonable measure and fair response to many of the concerns raised by workers and employers around the country. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Last but not least, I introduce today the Energy and Science Research Investment Act, which recognizes the urgent need to finance and manage well our Nation's basic research initiatives.

Over the past 5 years, Federal funding for medical research has nearly doubled, yet funding for research in the physical sciences has remained stagnant at 1990 levels.

The Energy and Science Research Investment Act will provide additional resources to the Department of Energy's Office of Science and make organizational changes that will enhance the accountability and oversight of energy research and science programs at the DOE.

Mr. Speaker, I thank those who have signed on as original cosponsors of these bills, and I urge others to join us in becoming cosponsors of these three key measures.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks).

THREAT REDUCTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I introduced the Threat Reduction Implementation Act of 2003, granting the President permanent waiver authority over Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction certification requirements to prevent dangerous delays in this critical defense program. Unnecessary restrictions and delays in funding Nunn-Lugar put Americans at risk of potential attacks using smuggled Russian chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons technology or material.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 fundamentally changed the way we think of national security and protecting the homeland. Unlike adversaries of the past, our enemies today not only utilize untraditional weapons in their war of terror, but also are seeking access to new and even more destructive weapons, such as chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.

Twelve years ago, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program was born out of the necessity to ensure that the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union would not fall into the wrong hands as the Soviet empire was coming apart. While much has been done to dismantle these weapons, continuing economic and social weaknesses in Russia, coupled with an eroding early warning system, poorly secured Russian weapons materials, and poorly paid Russian weapons scientists and security personnel, increase the threat of mass destruction on an unprecedented scale.

Unfortunately, every year opponents of the CTR program wage a campaign to slow down or even block funds for the continuation of U.S. efforts in Russia to monitor and reduce weapons-usable nuclear material and other weapons of mass destruction. While accountability and oversight are necessary to make sure that Nunn-Lugar funds are serving their intended purpose, recurrent delays owing to outdated certification requirements have proven detrimental to our ability to protect the homeland.

During the fiscal year 2003 Defense authorization and appropriation debates, the administration requested permanent waiver authority over many certification requirements in order to permit elements of the program to go forward. After a drawn out debate, conferees ended up granting a 3-year waiver on the Nunn-Lugar certification requirements and a 1-year waiver for the construction of a chemical weapons construction facility in Shchuchye, Russia. Avoiding lengthy and unnecessary delays in the Nunn-Lugar program