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YOUR ISSUES YOUR AGENDA • SPRING 2000

DR. FLETCHER WORKING TO ENSURE ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE

Dr. Ernie Fletcher works toward a final patient protection bill to be considered by the House and Senate, he strongly believes that the final bill must include provisions to help the 44 million uninsured Americans gain access to quality health insurance that is affordable.

"I am very concerned about the growing number of folks who annually enter the rolls of the uninsured," said Fletcher. "Currently one in six Americans are without health insurance and for every 1% increase in premium rates, 300,000 more Americans lose their health insurance. I was particularly disturbed to read a recent Journal of American Medicine study which stated that uninsured patients in the hospital are three times more likely to die than patients with insurance. They also found that over the long run uninsured Americans tend to die at an earlier age than insured Americans."

"We must allow your health care to become more affordable," said Fletcher. "This is why I will continue my work in Congress to provide real patient protections, while finding solutions to reduce the number of uninsured Americans. I believe we must create new options that give folks the access they need to quality, affordable health insurance. By doing so we will lower costs, improve the quality of health care and increase coverage to the uninsured."



Congressman Fletcher discussing the importance of access to health care.

Dr. Fletcher believes that the following Health Care access provisions should be included in the final patient protection bill:

- **TAX-DEDUCTIBLE PREMIUMS FOR SELF-EMPLOYED & UNINSURED**
Allows small businesses and individuals to deduct 100% of their health care insurance premiums when they file their tax returns.
- **TAX-DEDUCTIBLE PREMIUMS FOR LONG-TERM CARE**
Gives the 7.3 million Americans now in need of long-term care services, whether at home or in a nursing home facility, a 100% tax deduction on their insurance premiums.
- **COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER NETWORKS**
Allows community-based providers the opportunity to form health care networks in order to meet the unique needs of employers and employees in medically underserved areas.
- **HEALTHMARTS**
Creates new local purchasing cooperatives for firms, health plans and providers. Employers may purchase insurance through the HealthMart, and individuals can join their own HealthMart as well. HealthMarts must offer at least two coverage options to employees.



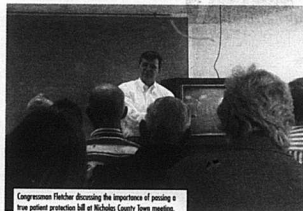
Fletcher discussing his role in helping folks throughout Central Kentucky during the 106th Congress.

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WORKING TO ACCELERATE CHILDREN'S ENROLLMENT IN STATE INSURANCE PROGRAMS AND PROVIDE UNINSURED WOMEN WITH MEDICAID TREATMENT FOR BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER

Recently during the general budget debate on the House floor, Congressman Fletcher gave a passionate speech regarding the importance of increasing the National Institute of Health's (NIH)



Congressman Fletcher discussing the importance of passing a true patient protection bill at Madison County town meeting.

budget by an additional \$1 billion. Since 1995, the Republican controlled Congress has increased the NIH funding by 58%.

"As a nation, it's our moral obligation to adequately invest in treating and curing the illnesses that affect too many Americans each and every year. I am proud to say that included in our budget for 2001 is yet another increase for the NIH of \$1 billion -- now, not later, is the time to fight cancer, diabetes, heart disease and the many other illnesses that affect our daily lives."

Additionally, Dr. Fletcher was successful in ensuring that two very important health amendments were included in the final budget passed by the House and Senate. Fletcher's amendments would provide \$250 million in funding over 5 years to:

- Ensure all eligible children are enrolled in State Children's Health Care Programs (KCHIP in Kentucky).
- Ensure Medicaid coverage for uninsured women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) screening program.

Last year Congressman Fletcher was successful in establishing a CDC Cancer Prevention Center at the University of Kentucky. This is why his amendment is so important.

VOTING FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANT LEGISLATION - UNDER BILL KENTUCKY CITIZENS WOULD RECEIVE PRIORITY FOR TRANSPLANT ORGANS

Dr. Ernie Fletcher voted for the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Amendments, which would make the organ transplant system more efficient and ensure Kentuckians are given priority to organs donated within the Commonwealth.

"These changes to our organ donation laws achieve a very important goal for citizens throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky," said Fletcher. "As a family physician, I understand that we can not and must not send our citizens outside of the Commonwealth to get the lifesaving organ transplants they so badly need," continued Fletcher. "This bill ensures that citizens in Kentucky are given priority to organs donated in our state - it protects our organ-transplant program."

The U.K. Transplant Center Director, Dr. Robert Mentzer, Jr. and Dr. Thomas Johnston praised Dr. Ernie Fletcher for his vote and leadership in the United States House of Representatives on this very important issue.

"The transplant patients and program of the University of Kentucky were extremely grateful for Congressman Fletcher's unwavering commitment and support for the transplant program within the Commonwealth of Kentucky," commented Dr. Mentzer.

"There is no doubt in our minds that this reauthorization will help ensure that more citizens in Kentucky get the transplants they need," commented Dr. Johnston.



Voting with Nicholas Etkin from Madison County to explain legislative process.

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