



October 23, 2009

### **Senate's \$247 Billion Doc-Fix Highlights Problem with Government-Run Health Care**

This week's attempt by the Senate Democrat Leadership to vote on a \$247 billion stand-alone bill to protect doctors from scheduled cuts in Medicare payments over the next 10 years highlights the simple fact that the government has failed to prove that it is an efficient health care administrator. In 1997, Congress attempted to control Medicare's skyrocketing growth through a payment formula known as the sustainable growth rate (SGR), and since its enactment it has been difficult for Congress to adhere to the resulting reductions in physicians' payments. In fact, since 2002, Congress has stepped in to delay these cuts from taking place which has made the problem worse. Beginning January 2010, absent a change in law, Medicare physician payments will be reduced by more than 20 percent. What is more, because of Medicare's chronic underpayments many doctors have decided to no longer treat Medicare patients. As Medicare is set to be insolvent as of 2017, Congressman Miller believes it is foolish to create a new government-run health care plan when the government has time and again proved that it is incapable of successfully operating existing health care programs.

### **House Passes Coast Guard Reauthorization Act with Tough Immigration Provisions**

Today, the House approved a Coast Guard Reauthorization bill to authorize \$10 billion in Fiscal Year 2010. Among its various provisions, the legislation includes language similar to Congressman Miller's LEAVE Act to increase penalties for knowingly bringing illegal aliens into the United States, transporting illegal aliens within the United States, harboring illegal aliens, or encouraging illegal aliens to enter the country. In particular, the measure increases prison sentences for any immigration offense, including paid smugglers and immigration crimes that result in bodily injury. Furthermore, the legislation creates three new penalties for cases not addressed in current law. Specifically, the measure stipulates prison sentences for individuals who illegally bring family members into the United States; sets penalties for illegals engaged, or intend to engage in terrorism; and allows life imprisonment for cases that involve kidnapping, attempted kidnapping, or attempted murder. Congressman Miller is pleased the House has strengthened penalties for those who recklessly disregard our nation's immigration laws and will continue working in Congress to find solutions to end our illegal immigration problem.

### **Financial Services Committee Approves Miller Amendment to Sunset the HVCC**

During this week's House Financial Services Committee mark-up, the Committee approved an amendment offered by Congressman Miller to sunset the Home Valuation Code of Conduct (HVCC). The HVCC, a set of rules regarding home appraisals that resulted from an agreement last year between the New York Attorney General and the government-sponsored enterprises, prohibits lenders from accepting reports from appraisers selected by mortgage brokers and real estate agents. While Congressman Miller is supportive of ensuring accurate appraisals, he has repeatedly expressed concern that the HVCC has increased costs to consumers, significantly hindered a consumer's ability to obtain legitimate and reliable appraisals, and adversely impacted small business professionals who work in the very neighborhoods where these consumers are looking to purchase homes. To address these concerns, Congressman Miller's amendment calls on the regulators to work together on one set of standards to oversee the industry and sunset the HVCC. At the conclusion of debate, the amendment received unanimous support and passed by voice vote. During these times of economic hardship, he believes firmly we should not impose regulations that increase costs to consumers and have the potential of creating a continuation of the declining housing market.

### **Solar Technology Roadmap Act Approved by the House**

The House on Thursday passed the Solar Technology Roadmap Act to require the Department of Energy to conduct a program of research, development, and demonstration to advance solar technology and establish a public-private partnership to promote the same. Specifically, the bill authorizes \$2.25 billion from Fiscal Year 2011 through 2015 for the Energy Department to establish an eleven-member Solar Technology Roadmap Committee with at least one-third of the members from the solar industry, thereby potentially creating a conflict of interest. The Committee would be tasked with creating a blueprint of short-, medium-, and long-term goals and then the Department of Energy would be required to fund these research areas. While Congressman Miller is firmly committed to enhancing domestic energy production through a comprehensive approach, he opposed the bill because of its steep cost, lack of flexibility, and potential industry influence.

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