

# House scuttles mandatory ceiling on hospital costs

Here's how area Members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes in the days before the Thanksgiving recess.

## HOUSE

## roll call report

### CONTROLLING HOSPITAL COSTS:

By a vote of 234 for and 168 against, the House killed proposed federal ceilings on hospital costs. This vote substituted a voluntary price-watching mechanism for mandatory federal price controls. It created a 15-member presidential commission to oversee and reinforce hospitals' voluntary efforts to slow the rise in their bills. The bill (HR 2625) was sent to the Senate.

The mandatory controls scuttled by this vote would have been triggered when hospital costs nationwide rose by a certain percentage. In 1980, for example, a hike of more than 11.6 percent would have activated the ceilings. Hospitals in violation were to have been heavily fined. The Carter Administration favored the plan and the American Hospital Association and American Medical Association opposed it.

Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., who led the move to kill mandatory controls, said the presidential commission will "keep even more pressure on hospitals to keep their voluntary program going, to improve it, to make it better."

Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., a foe of the voluntary approach, referred to the commission and said, "I submit that no member in this House can go back home and suggest that the question of the increased cost of hospital care needs any further study."

Members voting "nay" favored federal ceilings on hospital costs.

Reps. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, voted "yea."

Reps. David Bonior, D-Mt. Clemens, William Ford, D-Taylor, William Brodhead, D-Detroit, and James Blanchard, D-Pleasant Ridge, voted "nay."

SOLAR PROJECT: The House

WINDFALL PROFITS: The Senate

passed, 201 for and 146 against, a bill to spend \$25 million this year on research that could be one small step toward developing solar-energy satellites. The research would be in addition to a \$16 million study due to be completed in 1980. Such satellites would gather energy from the sun and convert it to a major supply of electricity on earth. The bill (HR 2335) was sent to the Senate.

Advocates say solar satellite development is a high-risk, high-promise venture that the nation must seriously consider if it is to achieve energy independence. Foes like the concept but caution against rushing headlong into the most expensive military or civilian project ever undertaken by the government — a \$70 billion research and development venture, according to the Office of Management and Budget.

Rep. Dan Glickman, D-Kan., a supporter, said nuclear power should not be the nation's only long-term energy alternative, and added that "it would be negligent for us not to at least explore" the energy potential of solar satellites.

Rep. Bob Carr, D-Mich., an opponent, said the House "should not participate in a way that haste makes waste," and should wait until the ongoing \$16 million study is completed before beginning more solar-satellite research.

Members voting "yea" favored the bill.

Blanchard voted "yea." Pursell, Bonior, Ford, and Brodhead voted "nay." Broomfield did not vote.

## SENATE

rejected, 32 for and 58 against, an amendment to cut from 75 to 60 percent the tax rate on "windfall profits" from so-called old oil. Such profits accrue to oil companies as result of the ongoing removal of federal controls from the price of domestic crude oil.

Old oil, that discovered before May, 1973, accounts for about one-third of domestic production. It was selling at

\$6 per barrel before gradual decontrol was begun this year. Now it is rising toward the world market price, which is \$23 and rising. The amendment, offered to an oil-taxation bill (HR 3919) still under debate, was favored by the oil industry and opposed by the Administration.

Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., the sponsor said, "The question is, how much should the tax be? Should it curtail our production? Should it make us more dependent on OPEC sources of oil? Dole believes it should not."

Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I., an opponent, said the Energy Department and Congressional Budget Office conclude

that production of old oil will be about the same under a 75 percent windfall-profits tax as under a 60 percent rate. Senators voting "nay" favored the higher windfall-profits tax rate.

Sens. Donald Riegle, D, and Carl Levin, D, voted "nay."

TRADE FUNDS: By a vote of 71 for and 19 against, the Senate doubled the staff and budget of the president's Special Representative for Trade Negotiations.

The measure was part of a funding bill (HJ Res. 440) later approved and sent to President Carter. The trade staff was increased from 59 to 116 and

the budget from \$4 million to \$8.5 million, to consolidate international trade functions in one office.

Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, D-Conn., a supporter, said the increase would create "a strong central trade agency rather than the current chaotic dispersion of responsibilities."

Sen. Harrison Schmitt, R-N.M., objected to the last-minute timing of the request, saying, "we should not throw the normal procedures of the appropriations process into a cocked hat."

Senators voting "yea" favored doubling the size and budget of the trade office.

Riegle and Levin voted "yea."

## Yule train will run

SEMTA's "Silver Streak Traindeer" will run from Pontiac to downtown Detroit three Saturdays prior to Christmas.

Two trains will run on Dec. 8, 15 and 22.

Train No. 1 will leave Pontiac at 9 a.m. and arrive downtown at 10:05 a.m., departing at 2 p.m. and concluding its run at 3:35 p.m. Train No. 2 will depart at 9:30 and arrive at 10:35 on the morning trip and head homeward at 2:30, concluding at 3:35 p.m.

Stations are at Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham and Royal Oak.

Round-trip tickets at \$3.50 for persons above age 6 are on sale at SEMTA's main office on the 12th floor of 660 Woodward; at the Renaissance Center train station; at Hudson's stores in Pontiac and Oakland Mills; and at the Royal Oak-Greyhound station. They are also available by mail or telephone.

Riders may travel aboard the train of their choice but must return on the same train on which they arrived.

## Irish caucus to hear MP

Nell Blaney, a member of the Irish parliament from Donegal, will be guest of honor when the Irish National Caucus has a dinner, reception and dance at 8 p.m. Friday.

The affair will be at the Gaelic League Irish-American Club, 2068

Michigan, Detroit. Tickets at \$5 per adult are available from the organization's president, Michael Kerwin, at 861-5760.

Blaney was recently elected to the European Parliament. He is on a tour of American cities.

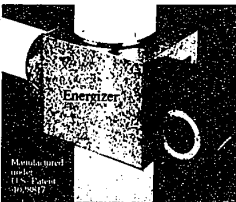
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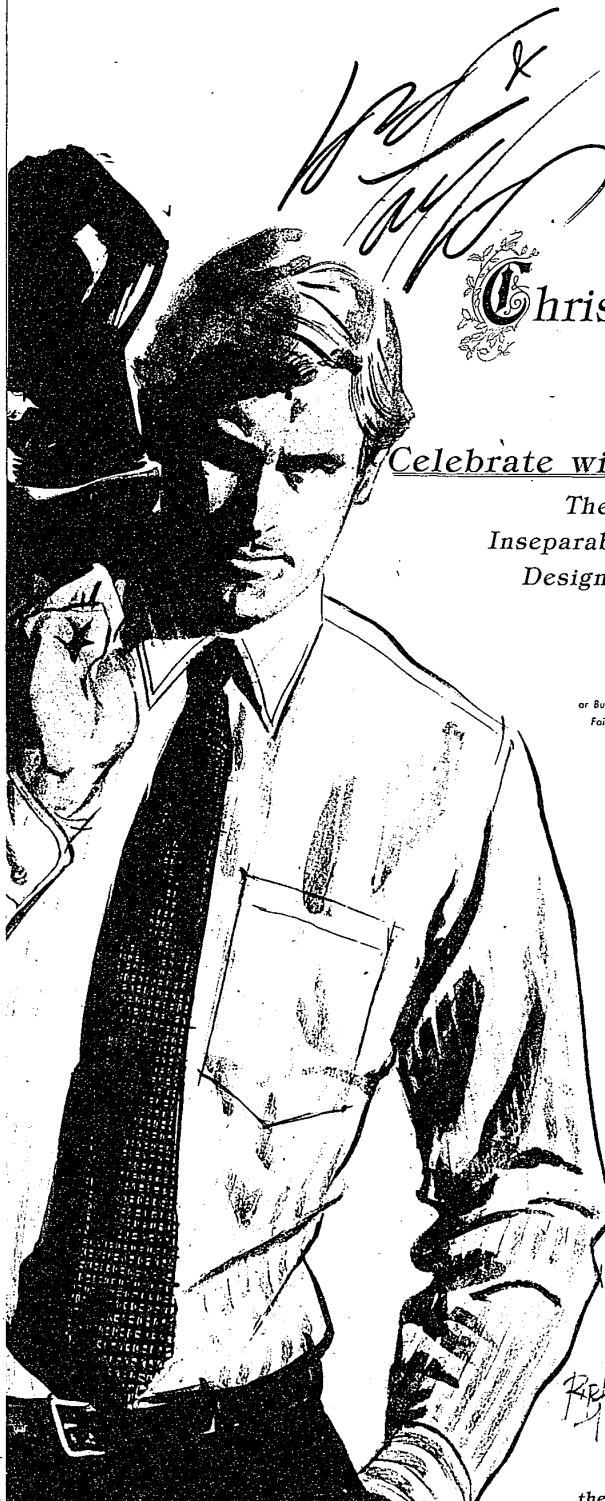
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