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Rep. Smith Champions Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act

JULY 30TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Rep. Smith Champions Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act

Rep. Smith Champions Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act

Missouri Representative introduces legislation to reduce Medicare red tape and improve access to home health therapy services

Washington, D.C. - This week U.S. Rep. Jason Smith (MO-Dist. 8) introduced the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act (H.R. 6225), which will eliminate an unnecessary Medicare restriction and allow occupational therapists to open home health therapy cases. The Missouri Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) joined the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) in thanking Rep. Smith for championing the bill which will eliminate home health scheduling delays and result in improved client access to therapy services.

“This bill would eliminate a Medicare restriction that is needlessly burdensome on patients and home health therapy providers,” said Rep. Smith. “It will increase access to care and doesn’t cost the government a penny.”

Smith represents a large district in Southern and Southeastern Missouri. He serves as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee that is reviewing proposals to reduce Medicare red tape and increase access for Medicare patients.

“The bill will improve access for all home health clients in Missouri and nationwide by making a simple change that has wide support in the overall therapy community,” said Jacquelyn M. Sample, DrOT, M.Ed., OTR/L, President of MOTA. MOTA represents the approximately 5,300 occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants and students preparing to enter practice in Missouri.

“Therapists can drive 100-200 miles per day when serving clients in this part of Missouri, and current restrictions mean that home health therapy services are often delayed if the agency does not have a physical therapist or speech language pathologist available to initiate services on a given day,” said AOTA/MOTA member Rhonda Wolfe Hutsell, MSOT, OTR/L, CLT, and OT with Salem Memorial District Hospital in Salem, MO.

Occupational therapy has long been a valued component of home health care due to therapists’ expertise in identifying home safety issues and in establishing routines to maximize a client’s ability to follow his or her plan of care. This legislation recognizes those contributions and seeks to address the arbitrary restrictions currently in place.

Amy J. Lamb, OTD, OT/L, FAOTA, President of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), called the bill a “win-win” for beneficiaries, the health care system, and policy makers because it increases access to services for Medicare beneficiaries, increases efficiency, and is a valuable investment of financial resources to support independent living without increasing costs. “As baby boomers continue to age, so does the increased desire to age in place,” said Lamb. “Simultaneously, the evolving health care system emphasizes increasing quality and efficiency, and decreasing costs. As a result, more patients are receiving care in their home or community where occupational therapy has a pivotal role in facilitating participation and engagement in their everyday life, and enhancing quality of life while aging in place.”

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office’s analysis reported the bill would not increase any federal spending.

Founded in 1917, AOTA represents the professional interests and concerns of more than 213,000 occupational therapists, assistants, and students nationwide. The Association educates the public and advances the profession of occupational therapy by providing resources, setting standards including accreditations, and serving as an advocate to improve health care. Based in Bethesda, Md., AOTA’s major programs and activities are directed toward promoting the professional development of its members and assuring consumer access to quality services so patients can maximize their individual potential. For more information, visit **www.aota.org**.

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Rep. Smith Passes Legislation to Protect Taxpayer Dollars, Rein in EPA

JULY 27TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Rep. Smith Passes Legislation to Protect Taxpayer Dollars, Rein in EPA

Washington, D.C. - The U.S. House of Representatives passed Congressman Jason Smith's (MO-08) legislation to protect taxpayer dollars and end the EPA practice known as 'sue and settle' Wednesday.

'Sue and settle' is the practice of environmental advocacy groups suing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in order to dictate the EPA's regulation writing process. Instead of defending itself, the agency settles the lawsuit out of court in a closed-

door agreement. Under current law, the legal fees of the outside organization in these settlements can be picked up by American taxpayers.

“When federal agencies settle lawsuits with outside advocacy groups behind closed doors, the outcome is costly new regulatory burdens with taxpayers picking up the tab,” said Congressman Smith. “It’s bad enough that the taxpayer ultimately pays for these regulations, but under current law it’s the taxpayer footing the bill for attorney fees. That is absurd.”

In the first term of the Obama administration, sue and settle agreements resulted in over 100 new regulatory actions burdening states, businesses, consumers, and local communities with more than \$1 billion in annual costs. Smith’s amendment restricts federal agencies from using American taxpayer dollars to pay for legal fees for settlements under the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

“My amendment prevents American taxpayer dollars from being used to pay the legal fees of outside advocacy groups for settlements. Organizations can sue whoever they want, but they cannot do it on the backs of taxpayers,” said Congressman Smith.

In October the Trump administration adopted Congressman Smith’s recommendation and stopped the ‘sue and settle’ practice, but current law does not prohibit future administrations from changing the policy.

“The American people are tired of an unaccountable federal government and we have the opportunity to do something about it. This is a necessary step to rein in over-regulation and bring transparency to the unelected bureaucracies,” said Congressman Smith.

This is the latest action by Congressman Smith to rein in the EPA and increase accountability in government bureaucracies.

Congressman Smith has worked with the Trump administration to repeal the Obama administration EPA’s ‘Waters of the United States Rule,’ a massive power grab attempt to over-regulate and claim jurisdiction of every rain puddle on farmers’ fields.

In 2017 the House passed Congressman Smith’s Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome (SCRUB) Act. The SCRUB Act would require the government to identify and eliminate costly and unnecessary regulations still on the books, many of which were created by the EPA.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Missouri's Farmers Know Best

JULY 23RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Missouri's Farmers Know Best

Good afternoon—Congressman Smith was deeply saddened to learn of the tragedy in Branson, Missouri last night and would like to pass along this statement in addition to his Weekly Capitol Report:

“My heart goes out to the families who lost loved ones in the horrible tragedy last night in Branson. I’m thankful for the Missourians who have responded to the emergency by rushing to the scene to prevent greater loss of life and provide support to the survivors.

***I'm praying for everyone affected by this terrible disaster."* – Congressman Jason Smith (MO-08)**

Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Missouri's Farmers Know Best
July 20, 2018

For Missourians, agriculture is the heart of our communities. The country roads of southeastern and south central Missouri weave together 19,000 farms, home to some of the hardest working people I've ever met. This week I'm kicking off a thirty-county swing to hear firsthand from the farmers and ranchers – big and small – who drive Missouri's economy and feed the world.

The thirty counties I am blessed to represent are rich with every farm imaginable. From the soybean fields in the Bootheel to the cattle pastures in the Ozark Foothills, southern Missouri is one of the most diverse agriculture regions in the country. Our farmers and ranchers raise pigs and cattle and grow corn and cotton. They supply the world with soybeans, timber, rice, wheat, and put milk on the table. Our corner of Missouri is home to sheep and goat fields, trout and catfish farms, honey producers, and wine vineyards. I could go on and on about the variety of farms in our district and the unique challenges they face, but the farmers I talk to have one complaint in common: they are frustrated by people in Washington who think they know better than they do how to manage their farm.

Agriculture is personal to me, as it is to many of the hardworking families in southern Missouri. At Salem High School I was blessed to join FFA, and after studying Agricultural Economics at Mizzou I took out a loan to keep our family farm in the family. As a fourth-generation family farm owner, I know the challenges that are unique to farming and the real harm that misguided Washington bureaucrats cause our farmers and ranchers. The career bureaucrats in Washington don't know what's best for Missouri's farmers and ranchers, the men and women who roll up their sleeves and know the value in a hard day's work on the farm know best.

I'll be driving our country roads all across southern Missouri, bringing local county commissioners, state representatives, farm bureau members, and other agricultural leaders along for the ride. We'll visit a wide variety of farms, listening to family farmers and large operations alike as they open their doors and barns for us and share what makes their farms special. I'm looking forward to driving thousands of miles across our beautiful district and hearing the challenges they face so I can bring their stories and ideas with me

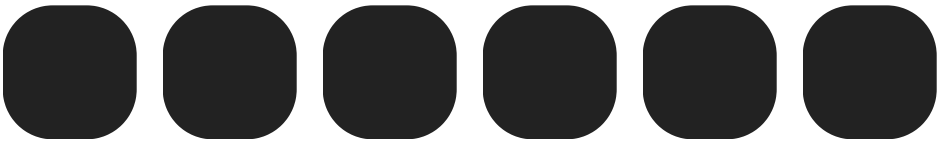
to the fight in Washington. I meet regularly with the White House to determine the ways President Trump and I can continue to protect rural America’s way of life and I am always encouraged by his sincere interest and concern for Missouri’s farmers.

Missouri’s farmers feed and clothe the world, and they deserve a level playing field with a government that makes it easier to work their land, not more difficult. As long as I am blessed to represent the hardworking men and women who supply the world with so much, I will do everything I can to keep Washington’s hands off of our rural way of life.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - A Supreme Choice

JULY 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - A Supreme Choice

Congressman Smith Capitol Report
A Supreme Choice
July 13, 2018

One of the most important decisions a president will ever make is who to nominate to the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court of the United States. Our country places a tremendous amount of responsibility on the nine men and women of the Court, and these justices shape the direction of the country for decades after their confirmation. Retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy was nominated by President Ronald Reagan in 1987, and he served on the bench for 29 years after President Reagan left the White House. This week President Trump announced his highly anticipated nomination to replace Justice Kennedy on the Court: Judge Brett Kavanaugh.

Judge Kavanaugh is one of the most qualified and solidly conservative judges who President Donald Trump could have chosen to be the next Supreme Court justice. When the president promised the country he would nominate “someone with impeccable credentials, great intellect, unbiased judgment, and deep reverence for the laws and Constitution of the United States,” he could have been describing Judge Kavanaugh directly. Judge Kavanaugh has a proven track record of interpreting the Constitution as written and upholding the rule of law. He currently sits on the most consequential appeals court in the country and has decided hundreds of cases on difficult issues. The Supreme Court has endorsed his opinions more than a dozen times, and his writings are regularly cited by judges across the country. He is “a true judge’s judge,” to borrow a phrase from our president.

In his introduction speech to the country, Judge Kavanaugh promised that “if confirmed by the Senate, I will keep an open mind in every case and I will always strive to preserve the Constitution of the United States and the American rule of law.” Judge Kavanaugh understands that the judicial branch’s job is to interpret the law as written, not to be activist judges who legislate from the bench. He has stressed that it isn’t the role of the judiciary to make up new rights in the Constitution and that the courts shouldn’t shy away from enforcing the rights clearly stated in the text of the Constitution.

In a landmark case determining Second Amendment rights, Judge Kavanaugh was the dissenting voice of reason arguing the Second Amendment clearly guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to arm and defend themselves. Even though he was in the minority, his clear reasoning helped pave the way for the biggest Supreme Court win for firearm owners since the Second Amendment was written. And in the hundreds of cases he has decided, he has developed a track record of taking away power from unelected

government bureaucrats and returning it to the people.

Despite Judge Kavanaugh's outstanding qualifications and firm commitment to our nation's founding document, the resistance to his nomination mobilized instantly. A flood of liberal Senators publicly committed to obstructing Judge Kavanaugh's nomination within the hour of President Trump's announcement. Mainstream media outlets blasted his pick as controversial before the announcement was even made. Protestors at the Supreme Court were seen filling in the blanks on their pre-made signs with Kavanaugh's name. And fewer than twelve hours after Judge Kavanaugh was introduced as President Trump's nominee, Senator Chuck Schumer announced he will oppose Kavanaugh with "everything he's got."

Judge Kavanaugh strikes me as a good and decent family man, and it's a shame so many obstructionists have committed to opposing him without even sitting down with him. I will be praying for him and his family as they go through the Senate confirmation process, which history tells us will be the absolute ugliest of politics. President Trump has made an outstanding selection with Judge Brett Kavanaugh, a man who will uphold the rule of law and interpret the Constitution as written. He deserves a swift confirmation to be the next associate justice on the United States Supreme Court.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - American Security Before Politics

JULY 16TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - American Security Before Politics

Congressman Smith Capitol Report American Security Before Politics July 6, 2018

Liberal extremists are taking their open borders strategies to new lengths with their latest rally cry to completely eliminate the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE). Extremist calls to “abolish ICE” – sometimes without even understanding what the brave men and women who enforce U.S. immigration laws do – should send shivers down the spines of Americans everywhere.

The men and women of ICE work within the Department of Homeland Security and are responsible for removing public safety threats from the country. These include criminal aliens, violent gang members like MS-13, and people who have violated our nation’s immigration laws. ICE stops criminals from moving weapons, drugs, and sex trafficking victims across the United States border.

They pursue criminals and terrorists involved in cybercrime, identity fraud, and financial crimes. In 2017 alone ICE was able to identify and remove 226,119 of these criminals from our country.

To everyday Americans this is a proper, responsible function of government to protect its citizens and provide safety and security. But to the increasingly liberal left, ICE has become the latest target for resistance to any sort of border security or enforcement of immigration laws.

In February, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf tweeted a warning to criminals in her community illegally to be on the lookout for ICE officers on patrol. ICE Chief Thomas

Homan said her actions as a public official were “no better than a gang lookout yelling ‘police’ when a police cruiser comes in the neighborhood.” Taking it a step further, obstructionists have introduced a bill in Congress to completely eliminate Immigration and Customs Enforcement altogether. The radicals have declared they “don’t believe in borders.” Borders aren’t just something you believe in or dream up, they are absolutely necessary for maintaining a sovereign nation and vital to controlling what is coming in and out of the country.

While the opioid epidemic is ravaging communities across the heartland, it’s ridiculous to “not believe” in controlling what people and substances flow into the country. Every public official or candidate who calls to “abolish ICE” is pushing a reckless, radical policy that would endanger Americans for no other reason than to play identity politics and score cheap political points. When added together, their platform of “catch-and-release” policies, sanctuary cities, and abolishing Immigration and Customs Enforcement would mean effectively open borders, and that is unacceptable.

First and foremost, we have to build a wall and secure the southern border. Without a wall, we will never stop the illegal immigration and smuggling taking place every day. Congress should pass my bill to defund sanctuary cities that openly flaunt their violations of federal law. And ICE? We have to put the extremists’ plans on freeze.

Ensuring the safety and security of the people is the single greatest responsibility for elected officials. President Trump and I know this, and that’s why we want a secure border and an immigration system based on the rule of law. In their latest call to abolish ICE, out-of-touch liberals seem to have forgotten about this responsibility entirely.

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