

Amendment to be offered by Senator Johnson. *2 KNOWE*

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SECTION ____ . SENSE OF THE SENATE ON REGARDING THE INADEQUACY OF THE PAYMENTS FOR SKILLED NURSING CARE.

(a) FINDINGS -- The Senate finds that --

(1) Congress confronted and addressed the funding crisis for Medicare beneficiaries requiring skilled nursing care through the Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999; and

(2) Congress recognized the need to address the inadequacy of the prospective payment system for certain levels of care, as well as the need to end arbitrary limits on rehabilitative therapies. Congress restored \$2.7 billion to reduce access threats to skilled care for Medicare beneficiaries; and

(3) Currently, more than 1,600 skilled nursing facilities caring for more than 175,000 frail and elderly Americans have filed for bankruptcy protection.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE -- It is the sense of the Senate that --

(1) the Administration should identify areas where they have the authority to make changes to improve quality, including analyzing and fixing the labor component of the skilled nursing facility market basket update factor; and

(2) While Congress deliberates funding structural Medicare reform and the addition of a prescription drug benefit, it must maintain the continued viability of the current skilled nursing benefit. Therefore, the Committees of jurisdiction should ensure that Medicare beneficiaries requiring skilled nursing care have access to that care and that those providers have the resources to meet the expectation for high quality care.

VOTE ON: _____

DATE: _____

YEA

by voice vote

NAY

GRASSLEY

NICKLES

GRAMM

BOND

GORTON

GREGG

MS SNOWE

ABRAHAM

ERIST

GRAMS

SMITH

LAUTENBERG

HOLLINGS

CONRAD

SARBANES

Mrs BOXER

Mrs MURRAY

WYDEN

FEINGOLD

JOHNSON

DURBIN

CHAIRMAN