

Alabama House Acts Against Managed Care, for New Bretton Woods

by Marianna Wertz and Stu Rosenblatt

Alabama State Rep. Thomas E. Jackson (D-Thomasville) introduced two companion resolutions in the Alabama state legislature in May. The first opposes managed care and expresses “legislative support that every person in Alabama should receive the highest quality health care available.” The other calls for a “New Bretton Woods” conference for “international monetary system stability.” Both resolutions passed the Alabama House of Representatives, then died in the Senate in the closing days of this year’s legislative session, which ended May 15. Representative Jackson plans to re-introduce both resolutions in next year’s session. The texts of the resolutions are variants of draft legislation being promoted by the LaRouche political movement across the nation, where similar resolutions are now pending in several state legislatures.

Resolution 466, opposing managed care, begins, “Whereas, due to the financial practices of health maintenance organizations and managed-care organizations, there is a current crisis in health care conditions in this country and state.” It then notes that the lack of adequate health care, because of managed care, conflicts with both Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, as well as Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, “both of which establish a universal right to adequate health care for all persons.” After referencing the “guiding principles” of the 1947 Hill-Burton Act, which was undermined by the concept of managed care, the resolution expresses support for “the highest quality health care available” for all Alabamans, “regardless of financial consideration.”

This was apparently too much for some House Republicans. After passing out of committee unanimously, the resolution sparked an acrimonious 45-minute debate on the floor of the House. Four GOP Republican representatives, including the Minority Leader of the House, lined up to attack the resolution. Representative Jackson debated each speaker for 5-10 minutes, defending his legislation from the standpoint of the General Welfare clause of the U.S. Constitution.

The resolution passed the House with only the four GOP opponents voting against it, indicating the significant opposition to the concept of managed care, when serious leadership is provided to lead the fight.

Resolution 422, calling for a “New Bretton Woods” con-

ference, is identical to the resolution introduced in the European Parliament in March (see *EIR*, April 7), and is a proposal originally put forth by Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche. It calls for the creation of a “new international monetary system to gradually eliminate the mechanisms which have led to the ‘speculative bubble’”; for “evaluating the possibility of anchoring currency values to an element of real reference, and to better and more completely control the movements of currency rates”; and for the creation of “new credit lines” oriented to the “real economy” and “infrastructure projects of continental dimensions.” It passed the Alabama House on May 2.

Working Poor with No Insurance

EIR spoke with Representative Jackson about both resolutions on May 17. On the New Bretton Woods resolution, Jackson said that he was asked to review for the Rules Committee the history of the original, post-World War II Bretton Woods conference, convened by President Franklin Roosevelt. Once he had done that, the committee unanimously sent the resolution to the full House, where it passed without debate.

Asked about the debate over the managed-care resolution, Representative Jackson said that he asked his GOP opponents whether they had “ever been to a hospital during an emergency and seen people turned away because they didn’t have health insurance. I live with that just about every day here in my district. There are poor people and they’re working people who don’t have insurance. An accident happens and, at the hospital, before they ask you anything else, they ask, ‘Do you have insurance?’ They won’t start working on you until they find out if you have insurance. That was the debate. They didn’t think everybody deserved quality care” because, they said, “we can’t afford it,” and “socialized medicine is no good.”

Representative Jackson said that in his district alone, in Jackson County, Alabama, over the last two years, more than 3,000 jobs have been lost to Mexico, under the North American Free Trade Agreement, with the shutdown of Vanity Fair Mills. “These are people who were buying homes, sending their children to college, and all of a sudden, their jobs leave,” and along with the jobs goes the health insurance, he said.

The Alabama legislature has already passed legislation mandating that managed-care companies allow mothers with newborns to remain in the hospital up to 48 hours. “Babies have lost their lives or gotten sick, and had to go back in the hospital, and the mother also. HMOs say 24 hours: You drop it and you’re gone,” he said.

Representative Jackson concluded, “I think it’s time for the United States to come up with LaRouche’s policy, and make sure that we all can have health insurance. As far as managed care, I think we have to do away with all the HMOs and let the doctors decide who’s sick and treat those who are, and not managed-care organizations.”