



NEWS

**From Congressman Joe Moakley
9th District, Massachusetts**

SUMMER 1983

“Space Weapons Ban” Legislation Progressing

In his now famous “star wars” speech, President Reagan challenged the scientific community to help us move away from the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). The President held forth the promise of a new futuristic ballistic missile defense system. Subsequent statements by the White House have confirmed that this includes space weapons such as orbiting laser and particle beam weapons.

I certainly agree that we should search for an alternative to MAD. But I do not believe that the alternative can be in the form of new, costly and exotic weaponry. A far simpler solution is at hand right now; let us make a good faith effort to negotiate real arms control. No technology, no matter how sophisticated, can match the effectiveness of bi-lateral and verifiable arms control agreements.

Although much of the “Buck Rogers” technology which is being discussed is still in the planning stage, the weapons race in space is at a critical point. This summer the United States will begin testing a highly sophisticated anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) — which is designed to destroy other satellites. Once this ASAT is operational, it will represent an irreversable step towards a space weapons race. Because of its speed, low warning time and versatility, this ASAT will be a grave threat to Soviet satellites. Moreover, since this weapon is small in size and launchable from an F-15 fighter plane, it will be a verification nightmare. It is logical to assume that once the ASAT is fully tested, the Soviets will be unwilling to enter the negotiating process to ban such weapons. It is also logical to assume that the Soviets will match us weapon for weapon. We should at least give negotiations a chance before committing ourselves to a star wars strategy.

I have introduced legislation, H.J.Res. 120 (S.J.Res. 28 in the Senate), along with 121 of my colleagues, calling on the President to immediately engage in negotia-



Congressman Joe Moakley and astronomer Carl Sagan appear at a press conference on Moakley's “Space Weapons” bill.

tions with the Soviet Union and the world community to ban weapons of any kind from space, or based elsewhere for use against space targets.

Recently, I held a press conference with astronomer, Dr. Carl Sagan and defense expert, Dr. Richard L. Garwin in which they endorsed the idea of a space weapons ban.

We must act now to stop a destabilizing extension of the arms race which could cost taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Both the United States and U.S.S.R. rely heavily on satellites for reconnaissance, treaty verification and communications. These functions help to maintain peace. Let us not endanger these “peacekeepers” and let us preserve outer space for purposes that can benefit all humankind.

Health Insurance For Unemployed Moves Forward

After months of debate in various committees, a bipartisan bill to provide health care benefits for a record high number of unemployed Americans is finally coming to the floor for debate.

A tragic situation exists for a number of unemployed workers who previously obtained health care benefits through their employers. These people not only find themselves without jobs but they are now lacking even basic health coverage. The necessity for this program is without question.

The Health Care For the Unemployed Act, H.R. 3021, would set up a temporary block grant program for participating states so that they may finance health care services for the unemployed and their families. Through matching grants, states will only be required to finance up to twenty percent of the program but will be allowed to determine a majority of the eligibility requirements and restrictions. The percentage of matching funds that the state must pay will be inversely proportional to the percentage of unemployment that they are experiencing. Thus states with higher levels of unemployment will not have to pay out as much in matching funds.

Under this program, the states will be required to provide at least some outpatient services as well as maternity and well-baby care. They will be restricted from using "means tests" to determine eligibility and will not be allowed to provide services to anyone who is eligible for Medicaid or other health insurance programs. Participating states will have to give priority to those persons who have been unemployed for the longest period of time, and those who have been out of work for more than a year must receive benefits. It will be left up to the

state to determine the financial need of deducting a premium from the unemployment checks of those obtaining assistance under this program. However, the maximum deduction will be five percent of their unemployment benefits and the average deduction, if taken, would be about two percent. These grants to states will have to be used in addition to, and not in place of, any existing programs.

The act also establishes a new program of direct discretionary grants to hospitals for individuals who have no other possible means to obtain benefits. The hospital programs will act as a "last resort" and first priority will be given to hospitals located in high unemployment areas.

In addition, it will set up new requirements for employers health insurance programs which will include a stipulation requiring employers to continue coverage for 90 days after a layoff and also give the laid off worker the option of purchasing continued coverage at the full cost.

Massachusetts could expect a federal grant of up to \$40.1 million if we choose to participate. This is a significant piece of legislation that addresses existing hardships while also taking action to prevent the same problem from recurring. The block grant system of distributing funds has been found to be the most efficient and cost effective means of addressing this particular situation. Given our current rate of unemployment and escalating health care costs, it is imperative that Congress take action on this legislation. No one should be denied medical care because they are victims of the economy. Hopefully, upcoming congressional action on this issue will correct a clearly unfortunate situation.

Moakley testifies At Organ Transplant Hearings

One of the issues of concern in the 98th Congress is the need for a more efficient and comprehensive nationwide network to match organ donors with the many individuals in this country who are in desperate need of transplants. The plight of Jamie Fiske and her parents in seeking a compatible liver donor brought much needed national attention to this most complex and critical issue. The Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the Science and Technology Committee held three days of hearings in April to examine the process of obtaining human organs for transplantation. In addition to discussion of the difficulty of locating compatible donor organs was the major problem of the cost of such operations and the lack of coverage of these surgical procedures under many health insurance plans. In the majority of cases, guarantee of payment for the operation must be made before the patient can even be placed on a waiting list for donor location and transplant surgery.

The testimony presented by the Fiskes and others who either received or were waiting for transplants together with the medical community, representatives from the Federal government and others will hopefully provide the

necessary tools to develop a plan for effectively dealing with all aspects of this major medical concern.



Congressman Joe Moakley introduces Jamie Fiske and her parents Marilyn and Charles Fiske of Bridgewater to Rep. Albert Gore (Tenn), Chairman of the Science and Technology Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight. The Fiskes came to Washington in April to testify before this committee on their experiences regarding the issue of organ transplants.

Moakley Supports S.S. Legislation

As many of you know, the Congress recently passed major legislation designed to ensure solvency of the Social Security Old Age and Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) trust fund. This package promises to eliminate the system's short-term financial problems and sharply reduce its long-term deficit.

This compromise measure received bi-partisan support from the majority of members of the Congress and from the Administration. While most of those supporting this bill, myself included, have indicated that they were opposed to some of the individual proposals contained in the package, all felt that the legislation as a whole was necessary to save the system from bankruptcy in the near future. Some of the major provisions of this act are as follows:

1. Coverage of new Federal employees hired after December 31, 1983 (\$9.3 billion*).
2. Extending Social Security coverage on a mandatory basis to all employees of non-profit organizations as of January 1, 1984 (\$12.5 billion*).
3. Prohibit termination by state and local governments if termination has not taken effect by the date of enactment of the legislation (April 20, 1983), also allows states and local governments who have withdrawn the option of voluntarily rejoining (\$3.2 billion*).
4. Delay June 1983 cost-of-living adjustment until December 1983 (January check) future COLA's would be given in January instead of June (\$39.4 billion*).
5. Delayed retirement credit would gradually be increased from 3% to 8% per year between 1990 and 2010.
6. Stabilizer, starting in 1988, if fund ratio in the combined OASDI trust funds at the beginning of the year were less than 20% (the amount determined by the Congress to ensure solvency) an automatic COLA would be based on the lower of the CPI increase or the increase in average wages. A catch-up benefit payment would be made in a subsequent "good" year whenever trust fund reserves reach at least 32%.
7. Taxation of OASDI benefits for higher income persons. Beginning 1984, those receiving retirement benefits of \$25,000 (individuals) \$32,000 (married couples) (including 50% of Social Security benefits) would pay taxes on a portion of their benefits (\$27.3 billion*).
8. Acceleration in tax increases in FICA (Social Security) already scheduled but beginning in 1984 instead of 1985 (\$39.4 billion*).
9. Tax on self-employed persons to increase from 75% of combined employer/employee contribution to 100% of the same contribution (however, tax credits will be allowed on specified portions of this contribution) (\$18.5 billion*).
10. Increase in retirement age gradually to 66 by 2009 and 67 by 2027.

*denotes short term savings from 1983 through 1989

House Repeals Withholding Regulations

The House of Representatives voted May 17th to repeal the ill-conceived withholding on interest and dividend income. The vote, 382 in favor of repeal and 41 against, reflects a clear message from the American people.

As the original sponsor of the first repeal measure, I stated that I would continue to resist any bill which seeks to unfairly burden law-abiding citizens in order to eliminate the abuse of the few. Those that violate the law should be prosecuted, but there is no reason to penalize the majority of the American people for the illegal actions of others.

The Senate recently passed legislation to postpone interest and dividend withholding until 1987 and establish elaborate reporting requirements. The Treasury Department has also developed an alternative plan which would require the Internal Revenue Service to inform the banks of persons who are known to have evaded taxes on interest and dividends. The banks would then be required to withhold 20% of the interest and dividends of those known violators.

It is unclear at this time as to whether the Senate will agree to the House passed version or will insist upon sending the measure to a Conference Committee. At this time, however, the law remains in effect and everyone should be prepared to have their interest and dividends withheld beginning in July.

Given the public attention which has been centered on the withholding resolutions, the chances of misinformation being inadvertently passed-on to you is quite probable at this time. If you have specific questions regarding your income taxes or the withholding of interest and dividends, the Internal Revenue Service representatives who are trained and well-informed on tax matters relating to the general public, are a wonderful resource.

The IRS phone numbers are:

Boston area 523-1040	— Information
 367-1040	— Tax Forms
Outside Boston	. (800) 692-6288	— Information
	. (800) 892-0288	— Tax Forms

Moakley Holds Cigarette Safety Hearings

In 1981 there were 63,518 residential fires in the United States resulting from the careless use of smoking materials. While careless use of smoking materials is not the number one cause of fires, it is the number one cause of fire deaths in the United States.

Over one third of the fire deaths in the United States and 67.4% of the fire deaths in hotels and motels result from carelessly discarded cigarettes. In 1981, 2,144 people lost their lives and 3,819 were injured.

Hearings were held on H.R. 1880, the cigarette Safety Act, on March 24, 1983. This legislation, which I introduced, mandates the Consumer Product Safety Commission to develop performance standards for cigarettes to insure that they have a minimum capacity to ignite smoldering upholstered furniture and mattresses. In 1974, the CPSC was prohibited from investigating cigarettes after the Congress declared that cigarettes were not a consumer product.

Among those who testified at my hearings were Jay and Carole Bondi, who lost their two small children when a neighbor's house burned; Betty Brinkley, who was severely disfigured and lost her three children and husband after her husband fell asleep smoking; and Maura Melody, who's firefighter husband was killed after a burning building collapsed on him while fighting a cigarette fire.

Organizations representing firefighters, public health, medical and research organizations testified in support of the bill. Some of the most startling evidence came from Johns-Hopkins University researchers who testified that nearly 40% of the victims of cigarette fires are innocent by-standers. They also testified that the victims were disproportionately small children and the elderly.

In my testimony, I noted that recent research by the National Bureau of Standards and the United States

Testing Laboratories indicates that the manufacture of fire-safe cigarettes is technically feasible and that certain cigarettes already being produced would probably meet a standard. Research has shown that some cigarettes will continue to burn for 40 to 45 minutes after being dropped into upholstered furniture. Sherman's, a New York brand cigarette which is advertised as having no chemical additives, will self-extinguish within 5 to 6 minutes if left unpuffed. More's, the fastest growing brand of cigarettes on the market, has also tested well as has Carlton's, the lowest tar and nicotine cigarette on the market.

Further Congressional Action is expected later this year.

A Personal Message from Joe Moakley

Please don't forget that our Washington, Boston, and Taunton offices exist to serve *you*. If you have a question or a problem, don't hesitate to contact either my Washington, Boston or Taunton staff.

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