

The Savvy Senior by Carol Martin

Recently, The Seniors Coalition applauded the U.S. House of Representatives passage of H.R. 4600, a measure designed to reduce health care costs through medical liability reform. The measure passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 217-203, a close vote that nonetheless included bipartisan support.

"The Help Efficient, Accessible Low Cost Timely Health Care (HEALTH) Act of 2002" limits economic damages to \$250,000 or twice the economic damages awarded, though economic damages are not way limited by the bill. In addition, excessive attorneys' fees are limited and the legislation places a three-year statute of limitations on such lawsuits. TSC has supported these reforms as ways to ease the burden of medical liability insurance premiums - premiums that are unfortunately passed on to the health care consumer.

"The greed of trial lawyers, their huge lawsuits, and multimillion-dollar awards against health care professionals have driven up the cost of medical liability insurance by 500 percent over the last three years," wrote TSC Chairman Mary M. Martin in a letter to lawmakers. "This unchecked greed is hurting seniors. It's forcing hospitals to close their doors, health care professionals to shut down their practices, and nursing homes to file for bankruptcy. In the end, it's seniors and other patients who pay for these lawsuits," she wrote.

TSC has been pushing hard for the passage of H.R. 4600, and TSC's chairman cites senior activists as instrumental in securing House approval. "TSC members throughout the country have been contacting their representatives," said Ms. Martin. "Their efforts have not gone to waste. Lawmakers have listened, and now we are one step closer to putting the brakes on one important part of seniors' spiraling health care costs," she said.

The measure passed with bipartisan support, a fact that TSC hopes will spur on the Senate to take up the bill. "It's time for the Senate to take the stand the House did," said Ms. Martin. "This bill will help seniors. We strongly believe that special interests like the trial lawyers should take a backseat when seniors' health care is at stake," she added.

© 2002 DBR Media, Inc.

YOU DON'T SAY!

The thigh bone, which is the strongest in the human body, is hollow. However, it has a greater pressure tolerance and bearing strength than a rod of equivalent size cast in solid steel.

Towns in ancient China were often arranged in patterns so that if they were seen from the sky, they would resemble an animal or symbolic design.

Despite their reputation, sharks rarely attack human beings. In fact, three times as many people are killed each year by lightning as are by sharks.

The sequoias and redwoods of the West Coast are not the oldest living trees in the world. The macrozamia trees of Australia, which live 5,000 to 7,000 years, are.

The reason the bottom of a wine bottle is indented is to strengthen the structure of the bottle and to trap the sediments in the wine.

The children's game, "Ring around the Rosy," derives its name from the medieval practice of scattering rose petals in a circle around one's bed as a protection against the Black Plague.

Ants keep slaves. Certain species will raid the nest of other ants, kill the queen, and kidnap the workers. The workers are then brought back to the captors' hives and are forced into performing menial tasks.

God gave us two ears, but only one mouth. Some people say that's because He wanted us to spend twice as much time listening as talking. Others claim that it's because He knew that listening was twice as hard.

SUNDAY EVENING/LATE NIGHT TV schedule for October 27, 2002. Columns include time slots (6:00-5:30) and various program titles like 'The Sopranos', 'The X-Files', and 'Survivor'.

MONDAY EVENING/LATE NIGHT TV schedule for October 28, 2002. Columns include time slots (6:00-5:30) and various program titles like 'The Sopranos', 'The X-Files', and 'Survivor'.

TUESDAY EVENING/LATE NIGHT TV schedule for October 29, 2002. Columns include time slots (6:00-5:30) and various program titles like 'The Sopranos', 'The X-Files', and 'Survivor'.

WEDNESDAY EVENING/LATE NIGHT TV schedule for October 30, 2002. Columns include time slots (6:00-5:30) and various program titles like 'The Sopranos', 'The X-Files', and 'Survivor'.