

STATEMENT OF U S REPRESENTATIVE JOHN E FOGARTY, 2ND DISTRICT OF R I
BEFORE SENATE LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF
HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, MONDAY AUGUST 26, 1963

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Under any circumstances it would be a pleasure to appear before this Committee. It is doubly so today, for it gives me an opportunity to offer my congratulations to your distinguished chairman, Senator Hill, on the recent marking of his 40th year as a member of the Congress of the United States. They are 40 years in which the American people have been particularly well-served, for Senator Hill has impressed his hallmark on many of the most memorable pieces of legislation enacted in our time.

It is fitting, then, that you, Senator Hill, should be one of the prime movers behind this effort to strengthen medical and dental education. Certainly, the bill before this Committee today, while it is perhaps something less than either you or I would have wished, Mr. Chairman, is of utmost importance to the welfare of the American people. It addresses itself to one of the most critical problems facing us today--that of finding the means to attract and educate capable young men and women in the medical arts and sciences.

I do not propose to tell you what the specific provisions of this legislation are. You know them well. Rather, I propose simply to say that unless we provide Federal support for the construction of medical and dental training facilities--unless we make available to worthy students the low-cost educational loans which this bill provides--unless we do at least this much--

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we will soon see the day when we will have no assurance at all that medical and dental services will be available in time of need.

It is incredible to me that we have waited so long to face up to our responsibilities in this regard. To those of us who have worked long and hard to secure necessary public support for professional health education, it is ironic, indeed, that the support is yet to be forthcoming. Assuredly, the lack of such support is a departure from prevailing patterns. Look at the record. We, the people, are supporting the construction of research facilities for the prevention of disease. And who is not proud of the National Institutes of Health and of the research programs which the Institutes foster in almost every medical and dental school in the land? We are supporting the construction of facilities for the treatment of disease. And who, sir, is not grateful to you for the great complex of hospitals which have come into being as the result of the Hill-Burton Act?

No one would be fool enough to suggest that the people of this country should be deprived of the benefits which have accrued to them as a result of far-sighted Federal programs in support of medical and dental research and medical and dental treatment facilities. Yet, in essence, any further failure to provide Federal support for the construction of medical and dental schools is to say just that. To fail to provide adequate loan funds for medical and dental students is to say just that: When it comes to the prevention and treatment of disease, we are totally dependent upon our medical and dental practitioners. Yet, we are fast approaching the day when we will not have enough of these practitioners. We will not have them

because we do not have the schools in which to train them. And there is no possibility that we can build enough schools, in time, unless Federal support is provided for their construction.

I am furthermore convinced that many of our most qualified young people will continue to be denied their opportunity to enter one of these great professions simply because of the cost of training. Dental education and medical education are costly, no less than any other types of professional training, and because this is true, a great many worthy students are undoubtedly having to forego the career of their choice simply because they do not have the money, because they cannot raise it.

Again, this is a departure from the general pattern. Though we have long since provided widescale Federal support for a variety of fellowship and loan programs, we have never--and this, too, strikes me as incredible--we have never yet designed a Federal program for the benefit of those very students who most need support--the candidate for the MD and the D.D.S. degrees. The Ph.D candidate in one of the basic or physical sciences has recourse to Federal fellowships. But the medical or dental student, facing four rigorous years of professional education and a total school bill of staggering proportions, is denied that opportunity. I see no reasonable justification for this state of affairs. I am convinced that we must do something constructive about it and that we must do it now.

I do not in all candor look upon H.R. 12 as the final and perfect answer to the problems of medical and dental education. I personally was deeply disappointed at the striking of the scholarship provisions and the forgiveness features by the House. I would prefer a bill which offered schools some assistance in meeting operating costs. But whatever reservations I have

on these points are far outweighed by the seriousness of the problems which exist in medical and dental education and by the fact that H.R. 12, as it passed the House, still offers an excellent beginning, a thoughtful and responsible beginning, toward the solution of those problems. I gave it my vote in the House. Today, I respectfully urge my colleagues in the Senate to give it theirs. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to appear before you.