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## Medical Group Accused of Killing Health Proposal

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## Medical group accused of killing health proposal

Post State Capital Bureau

AUSTIN — In a blistering personal privilege speech Friday, freshman Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Houston, accused the powerful Texas Medical Association of killing his bill to authorize controversial health maintenance organizations (HMOs) in Texas.

Leland's bill, too low on the calendar as time ran out Friday for considering the measure, actually never came before the House for a floor vote.

He linked his speech loosely with House rejection Friday of a motion to debate Rep. R. C. "Nick" Nichols' bill to enlarge the present nine-member State Board of Health to 15 members, action that would dilute physicians' power on the board.

HMOs are medical organizations that provide complete health services for a single monthly payment — typically in the range of \$50 for a family of four.

"Because the Texas Medical Association could not fully control health maintenance organizations under the provisions of this legislation, they consciously chose to kill it," he said.

Liberals in the hushed chamber jumped to their feet and applauded as Leland concluded:

"The opportunity for decent, quality health care at reasonable cost is not a privilege, but a right. Today we have denied the people of Texas that right."

Conservatives got their chance to applaud a moment later when freshman Rep. Larry Vick, R-Houston, followed Leland to the microphone.

"I personally resent someone accusing me directly or indirectly" of reacting to "pressure put upon me by someone other than the people I represent," he said.

"The TMA in no way contacted me. I was not pressured by anyone. . . ."