

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SPECIAL 80TH BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE TO SYLVIA ENGEL

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, of the many things I've put into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, this one gives me the most pleasure. Today, on June 29, 2000, my mother is celebrating her 80th birthday.

My mother, Sylvia Engel, or SeRoy as everyone calls her, has always been the proverbial "live wire." When I was a little boy, she would take me to see her roller skate in the roller derby practices. She also is an accomplished actress, and would perform on stage in community and off-Broadway shows. I always say that my ability to speak in front of groups stems from watching my mother do the same, since I was a little boy. She was always very outgoing and to this day goes bowling every week, and until just a few years ago directed the singing and dancing shows at her condominium in Florida.

My mother has always been a very kind person, loving and caring to her family, one, who along with my father always taught me right from wrong, and stressed education as the key to elevating oneself in helping to gain a better future.

My mother and my father, Phil, had the benefit of 47 wonderful years of marriage together, where they worked hard and struggled to provide a good life for me and my sister, Dori. Today, my mother is grandmother to 11 children. Pat and I have given my mother 3 grandchildren: Julia, Jonathan and Philip, and Dori and Jordan have given my mother 8: David, Rachel, Yosef, Yacov, Naomi, Malky, Esty, and Ricky.

My mother was born in New York City as the second child of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, Yudis or Julia and Joe, who came to this country, like so many others, for a better life. Her mother, my grandmother, Julia, lived with us when I was growing up and raised my mother and her sister Bea and brother Irving, because she was widowed at an early age. My mother, who they tell me was a "tomboy" growing up, learned to be self-reliant and resilient at an early age, traits which she still manifests today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my mother how very much I love her and what a tremendous inspiration she is to me today and has been so my whole life. I hesitated entering this into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and giving her a surprise party, because she doesn't look her age, and doesn't want too many people to know. But having achieved this milestone is something of which to be proud, especially after two heart surgeries and a lifetime of giving herself to family, friends, and everyone with whom she's come into contact. With my mother, one can certainly say she may be one year older than last year, but she'll never be old.

Congratulations, and Mazel Tov, mom. May you have many, many more years of life's pleasures, and may you continue to brighten the lives of all those you touch.

MEDICARE RX 2000 ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ERNEST J. ISTOOK, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, I want prescription drugs to be available and affordable, but this is not the way to do it. If something is overpriced, it's nonsense to have government step in and agree to pay that inflated price. That is not good stewardship of public money.

Congress should be holding hearings about price-fixing allegations, and about whether there is price-gouging of American patients, to subsidize overseas sales of prescription drugs. But if costs are exorbitant, it's wrong-headed to use tax dollars to pay those inflated prices. That will not bring the prices down.

Instead, there is a stampede to buy the votes of senior citizens, by spending enormous amounts of taxpayers' money on a new entitlement. I'm not joining that stampede to buy votes with taxpayers' money. I'm disappointed that fellow Republicans would abandon principles to buy votes with promises of a huge new government program. Yet the Democrat plan is worse; its cost is about double. Both sides are in a bidding war, and both are bidding with taxpayers' money.

The cost of the GOP plan is not "only" \$8 billion a year. The official projection says it soon will be \$28 billion a year and probably it will be even higher. It would be automatic spending, which would go on forever. This is how our national debt was created, and why it's so tough to balance the budget and pay down the debt.

Medicare is already in major financial trouble. You don't fix it by adding more spending, when it's already costing too much and delivering too little.

For example, if the foundation of your house is crumbling, you don't build a new third story. Instead, you fix the foundation before you consider adding on. That's what we should do with Medicare.

Medicare's government bureaucracy doesn't even pay hospitals (especially rural hospitals) the cost of the care they provide. That drives up medical costs for everyone who is not on Medicare. This is part of what we should fix first, before promising an new expensive benefit.

CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF THE MOTHER ROAD: BARSTOW OPENS A ROUTE 66 MUSEUM

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, this will be a very special Independence Day in Barstow, California where we will celebrate the opening of a museum commemorating Route 66, the Mother Road that led millions of Americans west to the promise of unlimited dreams and horizons in the Golden State.

The opening of the museum on July 4 will provide a delightful reminder that the towns and cities of my district provided the hospitality and welcome to most of those Americans making the long drive West. Barstow was—and remains—a friendly oasis from the hours-long drive across the great Mojave Desert.

Visitors will have a chance to remember the exciting early days of driving America's highways with old photographs, road signs and a vintage 1926 Dodge touring sedan. The museum has visionary plans of returning Barstow to its status as a way station along the desert highways.

It is especially commendable that this museum will be an anchor for another older reminder of the history of Western travel: The Casa del Desierto Harvey House, a historic stop opened for travelers in 1911 on the Santa Fe Railway's trains to and from California. Thousands of train travelers each year stopped to marvel at this towering adobe palace and be served food by the famous Harvey Girls in its elegant dining rooms. This magnificent depot and hotel, which has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, has been fully restored and returned to use through the efforts of Barstow's civic leaders and volunteers.

The location of the Route 66 Museum in this historic railroad structure will provide modern travelers with a fascinating window into the past, and should make Barstow even more of a popular stopover along desert highways.

This new museum will add to the reputation of San Bernardino County as one of the top destinations for those who are fans of Route 66 history. It joins another fine museum in Victorville, another historic Mojave Desert way-station, and the San Bernardino Route 66 Rendezvous classic car festival, which draws 600,000 visitors each September in one of the nation's largest free-admission events.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating Barstow and its citizens for renewing their city's rightful place as one of the welcoming points to California, and one of the highlights along Route 66, the Mother Road.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

RENAMING THE JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN POST OFFICE THE LES ASPIN POST OFFICE BUILDING

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share with my colleagues my great pride and respect for former colleague and friend, Les Aspin. I wholeheartedly support renaming the Janesville, Wisconsin Post Office as the Les Aspin Post Office.

Les Aspin was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1938. He graduated summa cum laude from Yale University, and later received a degree in politics, philosophy and economics from Oxford University. He completed his doctorate in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. From 1969 to 1971, Aspin was distinguished professor of international policy at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In 1971, Aspin was first elected to the United States House of Representatives from the First Congressional District of Wisconsin. During his 22 years in the House, his interest and dedication to international security, defense and arms control earned him Chairmanship on the House Armed Services Committee from 1985 to 1993. Following his tenure in Congress, he served as Secretary of Defense from 1993–1994 in the cabinet of President William J. Clinton. His unparalleled expertise and influence on Department of Defense issues have guided the development of a comprehensive defense policy for the United States.

In 1994, the Marquette University Les Aspin Center for Government was founded in his honor. The Aspin Center was established under the same ideals and integrity with which Dr. Aspin conducted his political career. The Aspin Center is designed to educate future leaders by giving students an opportunity to participate in the American political process through Congressional internships.

On May 21, 1995, our dear friend and esteemed colleague passed away at the age of 57. It is my honor to have served Wisconsin with the distinguished Dr. Les Aspin, and I believe that it is fitting for his memory to be honored in the district in which he served.

LEGISLATION TO HELP VETERANS INFECTED WITH THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS

HON. J.D. HAYWORTH

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my good friends from New York and Nevada, Chairman JACK QUINN and Congressman JIM GIBBONS, on introducing this important legislation that will help veterans infected with the hepatitis C virus to be treated and compensated by the Veterans Administration.

Hepatitis C is a potentially life-threatening disease that can affect the liver and lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and death. It is a slow,

progressive disease that advances over 10 to 30 years. It is no wonder that hepatitis C wasn't identified until 1989. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne disease that is transmitted through blood contact. Those at high risk include patients who had hemodialysis, patients who had blood transfusions or organ transplants, and healthcare professionals (such as health care workers or medics) who may have come in contact with infected blood, instruments or needles.

Another high-risk population is our nation's military veterans. In fact, hepatitis C continues to be diagnosed at an alarming rate among our veteran population. The Veterans Administration estimates that 6.6 percent of veterans are infected with hepatitis C, a rate more than 3 times that of the general population. Of all of the military veteran populations who tested positive for hepatitis C throughout VA medical facilities nationwide in March 1999, Vietnam-era veterans accounted for 64 percent of the cases.

What prevents the VA from treating and compensating these infected veterans is the slow progression of the disease and the recent discovery of it. In most cases, more than a decade has passed from infection to discovery. For example, a medic treating a wounded comrade in Vietnam in 1967 could have been infected with the virus, but not tested positive nor shown symptoms until some 10 to 30 years later. The 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis and less-than-stellar military personnel record keeping only compounded the problem.

Our legislation gives presumptive service connection to hepatitis C infected veterans who most likely contracted it through handling blood, blood transfusions or hemodialysis. These criteria will cover combat field medics, doctors or medical personnel who handled blood, and soldiers who gave blood to save a buddy's life or received blood to save their own. Studies show that 365,000 blood transfusions were performed among U.S. personnel in Vietnam between 1967 and 1969 alone. At the same time, blood supplies shipped to Vietnam in the late 1960s and early 1970s had a high rate of infection. An NIH study at this time showed that 7 to 10 percent of all patients who received a blood transfusion during surgery developed hepatitis C.

Chairman QUINN, Mr. GIBBONS and I applaud the VA for its outreach program to identify and treat veterans. We also commend the VA's attempt to address the hepatitis C problem through regulation, but we believe statutory relief may be the only remedy that will truly help thousands of veterans. While regulations are a good start, the VA is not mandated to ensure that these veterans are treated and compensated. It can, at any time, change the regulations or refuse treatment if it runs low on discretionary funds. Only through statutory relief will we ensure that the VA has the dedicated resources and funding to handle all of these claims. Also, having a statutory requirement will put this major disease on par with other major presumptive diseases. Finally, at the April 13th Veterans' Benefit Subcommittee hearing, several veteran service organizations, including the American Legion and the VFW, complained that the VA has already denied too many service connection claims by veterans with hepatitis C. In their testimony, AMVET stated that, among its members, the number of veterans being diagnosed with hep-

atitis C by the VA has increased, but the number being treated by the VA has not risen at all.

While Chairman QUINN, Mr. GIBBONS and I offer this bill as a remedy, we also offer it as a working document. We are willing to work with members of the Veterans Affairs Committee and our colleagues in this body as well as the Veterans Administration and veteran service organizations to produce a consensus bill. I am hopeful that we will be able to work out any differences and pass this legislation for our veterans.

In the heat of combat, we ask our young servicemen and women to risk exposure to unknown danger to save others with the understanding that we, as a nation, will take care of them in the future should they become sick. Mr. Speaker, the time has come to fulfill that promise.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT MONDAVI, RECIPIENT OF WINEVISION'S FIRST ANNUAL "VISIONARY AWARD"

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Robert Mondavi receiving WineVision's first annual Visionary Award—recognizing the person whose insight and foresight contributed in myriad ways to the U.S. wine community's overall betterment in the year 2000.

Robert Mondavi and employees of Robert Mondavi Corp. were instrumental in the past year in assuring the initiation of the WineVision process—an effort to develop an industry-wide strategic plan for the U.S. wine business. The winery, notably Michael Mondavi and Herbert Schmidt, was key in offering support, including becoming one of the first companies to contribute seed money.

All through the process, Robert Mondavi has provided inspiration, human resources and funding. As well, he has encouraged participation from other wineries and growers.

Robert Mondavi is known throughout the wine industry as the man whose vision of a successful American premium wine industry started America's wine renaissance in the 1960s. WineVision is proud to acknowledge his role in our community and recognize his contributions, those of his family and those of his winery.

Robert Mondavi began his success in the wine business in the 1940's when his father purchased the Charles Krug Winery. In the 1950's and 1960's, Robert became the first Napa Valley vintner to use cold fermentation extensively and popularized new styles of wine such as Chenin Blanc and Fume Blanc.

Robert Mondavi's winery is a culmination of a vision that he shared with his family. From its inception in 1966, the winery has stood as both an example of their innovation in winemaking and a monument to persistence in the pursuit of excellence.

In addition to serving as chairman of the board of the winery, Robert was and continues to be active in a number of activities promoting wine and food. In 1988, he launched the Robert Mondavi Mission program that was