

special rates). The head of the agency, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, is authorized to determine the existence and duration of such an emergency and its aftermath, and whether work is connected to it.

Subsection (a)(2) amends 5 U.S.C. 5547 to provide that an employee may be paid premium pay only to the extent that the payment does not cause the employee's aggregate rate of pay for any pay period to exceed the greater of (1) the maximum rate of basic pay payable for GS-15 (including locality pay and special rates) or (2) the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule. Under current law, two separate premium pay limitations cover most General Schedule (GS) employees. A GS law enforcement officer under 5 U.S.C. 5547(c) may be paid premium pay up to the lesser of 150 percent of the minimum rate of basic pay payable for GS-15 or the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule. In contrast, the premium pay limitation applicable to other GS employees (currently found at 5 U.S.C. 5547(a)) is the maximum rate payable for GS-15 (including locality pay and special rates). This amendment would create a uniform biweekly premium pay limitation. The calendar year premium pay limitation at 5 U.S.C. 5547(b) (for work in connection with an emergency which involves a direct threat to life or property) is similarly amended as well as expanded to cover work in the aftermath of an emergency involving a threat to life or property. Provision is also made for Office of Personnel Management regulations to harmonize the application of overtime provisions with other forms of premium pay.

Subsection (b) would set the effective date of the amendments made by subsection (a). The amendments would take effect in pay periods beginning on and after the 120th day following the date of enactment.

HONORING STEPHEN PETERSBURG

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I take this moment to congratulate Stephen Petersburg of Rangely, Colorado, on receiving the National Resource Management Award from the National Park Service. I would like to take this moment to thank Stephen for his diligent work to ensure that Dinosaur National Monument's resources are managed efficiently and effectively. At the same time, I would like to congratulate him on this distinguished award. Stephen's educational background laid the groundwork for what would become a truly accomplished career with the National Park Service, that has spanned almost three decades.

Stephen received his undergraduate degree in Forestry and a graduate degree in Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University. This education prepared him for his career in the National Park Service, which began in 1971 as a Park Ranger at Wind Cave National Park. After working for a little over two years at Wind Cave, Stephen shifted his professional talents to Dinosaur National Monument, where he began his illustrious tenure in 1973.

Stephen is considered a leader in fire management and training and is nationally known for his expertise. This past summer he worked with great care to protect our nation's forests, working on fire-fighting efforts in Colorado,

New Mexico and on the Clear Creek Fire in Idaho.

Beyond his work at Dinosaur National Monument, Stephen's desire to help his community is clearly a personal priority. Stephen is an active member of the Kiwanis and serves on the Board of Directors of the Rangely District Hospital. He is also a Deacon in his local church.

Stephen, you have earned the admiration of your friends, peers, neighbors and Nation. On behalf of the State of Colorado and the US Congress, I congratulate you on this prestigious and well-deserved award. Congratulations!

INTRODUCTION OF THE VACCINE INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM CORRECTIVE AMENDMENTS OF 2000

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program Corrective Amendments of 2000 (NVICPCA). Over the past year, the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) has been subject to several congressional hearings. I have met on several occasions with parents, doctors, and attorneys who have been involved in the current program seeking compensation for injuries that resulted from vaccines.

Vaccine injuries are, thankfully, very rare. However, some children have adverse reactions to vaccines. In a small number of cases these are very debilitating reactions. I am a strong proponent of vaccinations. It is important that children be vaccinated against otherwise devastating diseases. Widespread vaccination has and will continue to spare our nation from the scourge of disease. Our nation benefits from widespread vaccination. Those of us who are healthy are the beneficiaries of national vaccination efforts. As such, I believe very strongly that we as a nation have an obligation to meet the needs of those children who suffer adverse reactions.

I also believe that our federal public health officials should do more to ensure that we are doing all that we can to reduce the number of children who do have adverse reactions. I will continue to aggressively pursue this effort with the leaders of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

I was pleased when the Congress and President Reagan established the VICP back in the 1980s. This program was established to ensure that our nation continues to have a strong vaccination program while compensating those families where a child suffers a serious adverse reaction. When this program was approved, there was a real concern that due to lawsuits brought against vaccine manufacturers, some manufacturers would stop making their vaccines available leaving the American public without important vaccines.

The Vaccine Injury Compensation Program Corrective Amendments of 2000 would make a number of substantive and administrative changes to the VICP, in an attempt to restore this program to the user friendly, non-adver-

sarial, remedial, compensation program that it should be and was intended to be. The bill amends the VICP provisions in the Public Health Service Act (PHS Act).

The bill clarifies that this program is to be a remedial, compensation program, which is consistent with the original intent expressed by Congress in the House Report accompanying the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986. The program has become too litigious and adversarial in the eyes of many.

The bill also makes changes to the provisions relating to the burden of proof. Currently, the burden of proof is so high on the claimants that some children may not be receiving compensation that is due them. The intent of this program is to provide compensation for all claimants whose injuries may very well have been caused by the vaccine. Strict scientific proof is not always available. Serious side effects of vaccines are rare, and it is often difficult to prove causal relationships with the certainty that science and medicine often expect. Indeed there may be multiple factors that lead to an adverse reaction in some children and the program should recognize this. My bill will ensure that this is taken into account.

This bill will also make it easier to ensure that the costs associated with setting up a trust for the compensation award are permitted. This is important to ensure that these funds are available to provide a lifetime of care for this child. The bill also stops the practice of discounting to ensure that the value of an award for pain and suffering is fully met.

Often, the families of these children need counseling in order to help them deal with and care for a profoundly injured child and siblings. The impact of these injuries go well beyond the child who is injured. This bill will ensure that these expenses are covered.

The bill also ensures the payment of interim fees and costs. Under the current program, families and attorneys are often forced to bear these expenses for years while the claim is heard. Attorneys for the claimants are going to be paid for their fees and costs at the end of a claim, regardless of whether or not they prevail. Thus there is no logical reason why they should not be allowed to petition for interim fees and costs. This provision simply ensures a more fair process for the claimants, by ensuring that the injured child can have good representation while pursuing his or her claim. The current practice may hinder the ability of claimants to put their best case forward. This should not be the case in a program that was established to ensure provision for those children who have been injured.

Finally, the bill makes a number of changes to statutes of limitation. The program should serve the purpose of compensating those who were harmed. Thus, it is important to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible to ensure that injured parties are compensated.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW" ACT

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce Teachers for Tomorrow, a bill to address the serious teacher shortage in our nation's

schools. We have 54.4 million students in America's schools—the greatest it has ever been. But we lack the most important part of the equation—teachers! Nationwide, we will need an additional 2.2 million teachers in the next ten years. There are particular shortages in specific subject areas such as math, science, bilingual education and special education. For the first time in my district in Washington State, teaching positions have remained vacant.

We cannot afford to allow the current trend to continue where our best and brightest students ignore the teaching profession or leave it altogether. Where the median age of teachers is 42 years old, it is glaring evidence that new graduates are not entering the teaching field. There are a million teachers ready to retire in the next decade, leaving the classroom faster than new teachers are graduating from college. Even more troublesome is that only half of new teachers in urban public schools are still teaching after five years. Moreover, the new teachers who are twice as likely to leave are those with the highest scores on standardized tests. These are serious warning signs of the current teacher shortage and upcoming crisis if we do not act to recruit and retain teachers.

There are everyday heroes in classrooms throughout America. We must face the fact that our teachers are getting older and we are failing to make teaching a viable option for today's students and young professionals. We have to continue to make sure that our top graduates continue to enter the teaching profession. This legislation would do just that.

We need to empower individuals to make the decision to be a teacher. We need to make it possible for more specialty teachers and more teachers overall to enter our nation's public school system. This legislation would permit every public elementary and secondary school teacher to apply for loan forgiveness. Current law only applies to teachers that teach in certain specific areas or low-income schools. This bill would also increase the incentives to meet specific instruction needs by establishing a three-year program of direct reimbursement for those teachers. All other teachers would be eligible for a five-year program of indirect loan forgiveness. Both programs would forgive 100 percent of the incurred loan debt.

Additionally, this bill grants other incentives for new teachers. Under income tax laws, loan forgiveness would be granted tax-neutral status. This prevents the current problem where loans are treated as additional income that effectively place teachers into an inappropriately high tax bracket.

This is the only loan forgiveness legislation that provides for continuing education. Teachers need to be given the opportunity to continue their professional development. With increased expertise and training, they will be able to impart that much more knowledge into their lessons and students' learning processes.

Furthermore, our teachers deserve to see the benefit of their experience and be able to guide their classrooms and schools with local control. As leaders in the community, teachers and school administrators know how make the best decisions for their students. This legislation only provides federal loan forgiveness where graduates have incurred federal loans. It maintains the ability of local schools to make

hiring, firing and other decisions as they see fit. Local school administration is not a business the federal government should be in.

We need to support our teachers. Our teachers deserve our highest accolades for educating our nation's children. We ought to thank them for the meaningful work they do every day. Our students, the future of our country, learn under the hard work and patience of our teachers and they merit our appreciation.

I submit to my colleagues a plan to recruit and retain qualified teachers. We cannot shirk our duty to provide a high quality education to every child. I urge my colleagues to meet this challenge and support this legislation.

CELEBRATING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITPAIN IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

HON. JOSEPH M. HOEFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the township of Whitpain in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on its 300th Anniversary. During the years of 1683 and 1686, Richard Whitpain purchased approximately 4500 acres of land that attracted settlers seeking religious freedom and economic opportunities. This land of promise was established as Whitpain Township in 1701 near the center of the county.

Many important historical events took place in Whitpain. During the American Revolution, the Township played an integral role for General George Washington and the Continental Army. Whitpain is home to Dawsfield, George Washington's headquarters, and served as a battleground for skirmishes during the Battle of Germantown.

Early Whitpain Township was primarily a fanning area and later evolved to incorporate the growing industries in the vicinity. As early as 1804, there was a weaving enterprise in Centre Square and a mill on Wissahickon Creek. The Township had quickly become a flourishing community with both prosperity and promise.

As one of the oldest municipalities in Montgomery County, Whitpain Township is now home to more than 17,000 Pennsylvanians, Montgomery County Community College and several high tech firms.

I am proud to represent such an extraordinary town. This anniversary should serve as a long-standing tribute to hard work and dedication for all of those who have made Whitpain Township the wonderful place it is.

HONORING FRANK HODSOLL

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to commend the Honorable Frank Hodsoll on his outstanding service to his community. Frank is stepping down as Ouray County Commissioner after three years

of service. Frank is extremely active in his community and his leadership as Commissioner will be greatly missed. As family, friends and the Ouray community thank Frank for his service, I too would like to pay tribute to this distinguished American.

Leadership and public service come naturally to Frank. Over the past several years, he has served both his community and State well in a number of different organizations. He is currently serving as Vice Chair of the National Association of Counties (NACo) Telecommunications & Technology Steering Committee, Chair of the NACo Rural Action Caucus Telecommunications Committee, and has served as Director of both the Colorado River Water Conservation District and the Center of Arts and Culture in Washington, DC.

Beyond his efforts in Ouray, Frank has had a long and illustrious career in government, both at the local and national levels. Before working to improve the community of Ouray County, he worked with a number of the nation's most prominent governmental institutions, like the Departments of State and Commerce. Frank also served as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Deputy Assistant to President Reagan and Deputy to White House Chief of Staff James Baker.

Frank, you have served your community, State and Nation admirably. On behalf of the State of Colorado and the US Congress, I thank you for your generous and valued service to the Ouray community and to these United States. Best of luck in all of your future endeavors.

GONZALES—"LEXINGTON OF TEXAS"

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, in the town of Gonzales, Texas, on October 2, 1835, the first shot for Texas Independence was fired from a cannon by colonists waving a flag which proclaimed "Come and Take It." Gonzales became known as the "Lexington of Texas."

The Little Cannon has been recognized by many as a true and proper memento of our glorious past and has appeared in no less historic sites as the Alamo and the rotunda of the Texas Capitol, and is forever enshrined in The Great Seal of Texas.

Exactly 165 years after the shot was fired, on the afternoon of October 2, 2000, the City of Gonzales will accept the "Come and Take It Cannon" from the estate of Dr. Patrick J. Wagner.

The Little Cannon will be an ever-present reminder to the citizens of Gonzales of the courage of those who stood at the "Lexington of Texas" and first cried, "Come and Take It!"

CONGRATULATING PASTOR ALVIN A. JACKSON

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Pastor Alvin A. Jackson of