

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE SENIORS HEALTH CHOICE PRESERVATION ACT

HON. MARK FOLEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Seniors Health Choice Preservation Act. This bill will protect Medicare+Choice HMOs from additional payments cuts. Furthermore, the bill will assist Medicare HMO's that cover preservation drugs so that they can continue to provide this important benefit.

I believe we have a commitment to America's seniors to provide dependable health care through the Medicare program.

I strongly supported giving seniors more options and flexibility when I voted for Medicare+Choice in the Balanced Budget Act.

Empowering consumers to choose their care is the best way to improve quality and affordability in the health care system.

Unfortunately, more than 700,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Medicare+Choice HMOs nationwide have had their coverage either disrupted or discontinued over the past two years.

In some congressional districts—like mine—many seniors were forced to return to fee-for-service Medicare because there were no other options in this area. Even in areas that still have Medicare HMOs, seniors have been hit with increased out-of-pocket costs and reduced benefits,

Seniors in my district love their HMOs. They get things like prescription drug coverage, dental care, and eye exams and glasses. At a time when HMOs are getting a bad rap in a lot of places, we want to keep our HMOs in Florida.

Unfortunately, the policies of the Health Care Financing Administration are making this very hard to do. They have taken some well-intentioned provisions in the Balanced Budget Act and twisted them in order to cut payments to the HMOs who need it most, forcing them to leave certain areas—like rural areas—where they can't cover their expenses.

Even though we provided these HMOs with some relief last year, we need to build on this work to guarantee that current and future generations of Medicare beneficiaries have a strong health care system that offers them choices in how they receive care.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Seniors Health Choice Preservation Act in order to preserve their constituents health care choices and to prevent future crisis for seniors on Medicare.

COMMENDING JAMES SPELLMAN, SR. OF PAWCATUCK, CONNECTICUT

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, today I commend Mr. James Spellman, Sr. of Pawcatuck, Connecticut for more than five decades of public service on behalf of his Town, State and Country. On April 28, Mr. Spellman will mark his 80th birthday.

Mr. Spellman has dedicated the better part of his adult life in roles assisting the residents of his community and beyond. He served as a member of the Board of Education between 1948 and 1953. From 1955 and 1961, he was Judge on the Stonington Town Court. In 1961, Mr. Spellman was elected to his initial term as First Selectman. He would be reelected to this position successively for another 11-terms until he stepped down in 1985. His long tenure is a testament to the excellence of his service which was marked by innovation, foresight and a balanced stewardship of Town affairs.

During those years, the Town of Stonington went through a period of considerable growth, adding three new schools, a police station and a significant amount of public infrastructure necessary to serve a growing population and to respond to economic development fueled by the tourism industry. Throughout his career as Chief Elected Official and Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Spellman was known for his concern for all segments of the community, his willingness to respond to constituent needs at all times of the day and night, and his sincerity in pursuing the duties of the office.

Jim Spellman has also served his nation in a number of capacities. He was in the Navy in the Pacific during World War II. He was a member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for nearly 15 years. In this assignment, he worked to ensure that the region's fishery resources would be healthy for existing and future generations of fishermen from Stonington and throughout southeastern Connecticut.

Mr. Speaker, James Spellman, Sr. has a record of service to his community that few will ever equal. Although he no longer holds formal positions on boards or commissions, he continues to remain active in the community offering his bountiful experience and energy to help Stonington in the Twenty First Century. I joint citizens in Stonington in wishing him all the best in the years ahead.

HONORING STEVEN T. KOIKE

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, today I honor Steven T. Koike for being named the re-

ipient of the second annual Award for Outstanding Achievement, by the Friends of Agricultural Extension.

The Friends of Agricultural Extension is a volunteer group that supports the Agricultural Extension program in the San Joaquin Valley. Each year Friends of Agricultural Extension publicly recognizes the author of an outstanding program in adaptive research and extension, which addresses a problem or opportunity facing production agriculture. This year, Koike's program, on the subject "Research and Education about Spinach Diseases: A Model for Responding to the Needs of Growers of Minor Crops in California", has been selected.

Steven T. Koike serves as the Plant Pathology Farm Advisor for Monterey County as well as the counties of Santa Cruz and San Benito. Koike's research specializes in regional diagnosis of diseases of vegetables and floral plants.

Koike, in assuming the position he now holds, brought to the region the vision of a country-based pathology laboratory to provide rapid diagnostic and research services to the farming community.

Koike envisioned and brought into being (through grants, industry support, and county resources) a pathology laboratory fully equipped to deal with most fungal, bacterial, and nematode pests.

Steven T. Koike, with the laboratory in place, is able to provide California farmers timely and accurate diagnostic methods, serving growers and farm advisors from no less than 15 California counties.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to honor Mr. Steven T. Koike for his extraordinary research in the field of plant pathology, and to congratulate him on being named the recipient of the second annual Award for Outstanding Achievement. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Koike many more years of continued success.

AMERICAN HOMEOWNERSHIP AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1776) to expand homeownership in the United States:

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment by my estimable colleague from California, Congresswoman WATERS.

As a former Mayor of a large city, I know a thing or two about depending on Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) to pay for services and housing for

• 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.

poor communities. And let me tell you—there is never enough money in the pot to meet the needs of those communities.

I think the proposals made here today are great. I think creating incentives for teachers and police officers to move into distressed communities is a great idea. Mixed income communities provide lower income neighborhoods with much-needed role models and opportunities.

But let us be very clear about the funding for these changes. The money for these proposals we are discussing here today will have to come from the same pot of money that is currently set aside for the very neediest of Americans.

And there isn't enough of it to go around.

Today the floor is filled with talk about the need to reinvest in our communities. What I want to know is—when we are all back here in the fall debating the budget, will we be as committed to these programs—to these communities—as we are today?

Will we be willing to put our money where our mouth is today?

I support this underlying legislation. We should work together to revitalize those areas that need our attention.

If we are going to take these programs beyond their intended mission, we should be prepared to increase the funding necessary to add each of the groups we want to make eligible.

We cannot stretch dollars too thin at the expense of the people we say we are trying to lift up. I look forward to working with the sponsors of this legislation to ensure that the funding is in place to meet our shared goals.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF RAY MINTON

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ray Minton on his retirement as the Cannon County Election Commission's Administrator of Elections. He has served as Cannon County's chief election officer for 32 years.

A lot has changed since 1968, the year Ray started working for the Cannon County Election Commission. Ballots have gone from paper to computer, and records from handwritten to typed to computer. District lines have been redrawn. Candidates have won or lost by the will of the voting public.

No doubt the biggest change in Ray's life and the event that led him to the election commission was the discovery of a cancerous spinal tumor. After losing the use of his legs, he began to work part time at the election commission as part of his recovery. Ray has said that the work kept him busy and made him feel needed. And I can assure you that Ray has been, and still is, needed by his community and friends like myself.

We will sorely miss him, but I'm sure Ray will continue to be a positive role model, admired for his attitude and service to his community.

Ray, I wish you the best of luck in any new endeavors you decide to take on and for you to have a long and happy retirement spent with your family and friends.

HONORING DOCTOR ROCCO ORLANDO FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and join the Italian American Historical Society of Greater New Haven as they pay tribute to one of our community's outstanding citizens, my cousin, Dr. Rocco Orlando. This evening family, friends, and colleagues will gather as Rocco is honored with this year's Distinguished Service Award.

I often speak of our Nation's need for talented, creative, enthusiastic teachers who are ready to help our children learn and grow. Rocco is just that kind of educator. Throughout his career he has touched the lives of children from elementary school to college. His career culminated as he was appointed as a professor in the Sixth Year Graduate Program in Educational Leadership at Southern Connecticut State University—charged with preparing students for administrative positions in public school systems themselves.

Public education is the cornerstone of the American dream, leveling the playing field and providing every child with the opportunity to make the most of his or her talents. It is talented professionals like Rocco who truly shape the leaders of tomorrow. His unique dedication to education extends outside the classroom into the community itself. Rocco has long been affiliated with the New Haven Scholarship fund, currently serving as vice president, enabling hundreds of needy students to continue their education.

Shortly after the Connecticut General Assembly passed a collective bargaining law in 1966, Rocco began to study the effectiveness of the provided mediation process. His doctoral dissertation studied the collective bargaining negotiations between teacher organizations and Boards of Education in Connecticut. His extensive research led to his appointments, which he continues to hold, as an Arbitrator with the Connecticut State Board of Arbitration and Mediation, the Connecticut Board of Education and the Office of Policy and Management of the State of Connecticut. Rocco has worked diligently to ensure that the concerns and goals of employees and management are heard in a fair and just forum—helping to create an environment which meets the best interests of all Connecticut residents.

Today, as Rocco is honored with this very special award, I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation for his tireless efforts on behalf of our young people. He has made a real difference in the lives of many, leaving an indelible mark on our children and community. I am honored to join with his wife, Rae; children, Lisa and her husband Michael, Rocco and his wife, Joanne; grandchildren, Laura, Alexander, and Rocco; family; friends; colleagues; and the Italian American Historical Society to congratulate Rocco as the recipient of this year's Distinguished Service Award. His remarkable contributions are a reflection of the very spirit of this award.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE DIGITAL ACCESS ACT

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, with the Government's increasing dependence on information technology to accomplish agency goals, and at the fast pace with which technology is changing, the Government is finding it difficult to hire, train, and retain a technology literate workforce. The ability to use computers and the Internet has become indispensable to employees' education, career, social, and cultural advancement. Technology literacy has become not only a basic job requirement, but also a basic life skill.

Economists and policymakers have highlighted an acceleration in the growth of productivity, which measures worker output per hour, as a key reason the economy has performed so well in recent years. Economists have attributed the rise in productivity to better management, and to a wave of business investment that has allowed firms to take advantage of major technological advances, particularly in computing and information processing. The Government is no exception.

Last month, David Walker, Comptroller General for the General Accounting Office (GAO), testified before the Senate Government Affairs Committee on "Managing Human Capital in the 21st Century." He stated, and I quote:

"One of the principal strategies that agencies have used to deliver services with fewer staff has been an increased reliance on information technology. However, the agencies' ability to make the most of this strategy could be jeopardized by the competitive disadvantage they report facing in hiring and retraining skilled information technology staff."

He went on to say that if the government does not improve its human resource systems, in this regard, it will earn GAO's high risk designation in 2001. The Federal Times, a federal employees newspaper, recently reported that federal agencies are facing skills gaps, particularly in the area of technology, and are facing the potential loss of 30 percent of their employees within five years.

Which the advent of the Information Age, the need for technologically skilled people is escalating. Meanwhile, the number of skilled American high technology workers has declined. This comes at a time when efforts are underway to create an e-Government. E-Government is the widespread application of information and communications technology to deliver government services—fostering digital government.

Filing your income taxes on-line is just the beginning. In e-Government, citizens can log onto one Internet site, easily find the government services they are looking for, and use that site to conduct online transactions; businesses can fill out one Internet form for all their local, state and federal environmental regulatory compliance requirements and government officials can make all purchases and payments electronically, saving millions of dollars. To support e-Government, you must have an e-workforce.

In response to an increasingly competitive job market, federal agencies will need tools and flexibilities to attract, hire, and retain technologically savvy talent. The work that federal