

provide a more convenient, transparent and affordable way to choose among a variety of health plans that meets individual needs. Americans who cannot afford to purchase coverage within the exchange will receive financial assistance to ensure that they can obtain comprehensive coverage. Additionally, small businesses will receive tax credits that will make it more affordable to offer insurance to their employees.

I am also pleased that this bill encourages competition by ensuring that Americans will have the ability to choose a public plan alternative. Unlike private insurance carriers, the public option will not be obligated by big profits for shareholders or large salaries for CEOs. And while it represents just one option for the consumer and one component of health care reform, it will serve as an important tool to increase choice and competition and lower overall insurance costs.

Included in this proposal are a number of important health consumer protections. It will finally end insurance discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions and prevent insurance companies from imposing lifetime limits or dropping coverage when people are sick and need it most. It will cap out-of-pocket expenses so people don't go broke when they get sick; eliminate extra charges for preventive care like mammograms and diabetes tests; and protect Medicare for seniors while working to eliminate the "donut-hole" gap in coverage for prescription drugs. It will also require that insurers reinvest at least 85 percent of their premiums back into health coverage. This will limit the amount of money spent on advertising, underwriting, overhead and profits that do nothing but reduce health benefits for patients.

Improving access to coverage will also require investments in our health care workforce. Our system is strained by a lack of nurses and primary care physicians, particularly in underserved areas. That is why our bill contains important workforce development initiatives like new scholarships and loan repayment programs, grant programs for primary care training and immediate financial support for community health centers. This will strengthen the number of nurses, doctors and other health care professionals necessary to meet the increased demand for services.

This bill also makes historic changes to our antitrust laws by removing exemption enjoyed by insurance companies so that they are no longer shielded from liability for price fixing or dominating their market—all of which reduce competition and increase prices for consumers. It establishes new grant programs designed to encourage states to implement alternatives to traditional medical malpractice litigation with the goal of reducing frivolous lawsuits while allowing legitimate cases to be heard. This bill also has my strong support because every portion will be completely paid for, and it will reduce the deficit by \$109 billion over the next ten years.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is incumbent on us as policymakers to offer a new vision for health care in America—one that contains costs, improves quality, increases efficiency, promotes wellness, puts health care decisions back in the hands of patients and doctors, and guarantees coverage as a right to our citizens.

Every American deserves the promise of quality, affordable health care. I urge my colleagues to join me in fulfilling that promise

today, and support the Affordable Health Care for America Act.

RECOGNITION OF THE 211TH REGIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 211th Regional Support Group from Corpus Christi, Texas, for their tireless efforts to ensure the security and well being of not only the country of Iraq but the United States as well.

Deployed on December 1, 2008, this unit worked in the face of grave danger and performed in an exemplary fashion in the management of installation and camp activities.

Sixty members of this unit will be returning to my district on Saturday, November 21, and it is my honor and privilege to welcome them home.

Our Reservists put their lives on hold, to fulfill the duties asked of them. I have the greatest respect for our service men and women who selflessly disregard their own safety in order to voluntarily serve our country.

Today, I ask that my colleagues join me in commemorating the 211th Regional Support Group of Corpus Christi, Texas, for their service to this nation.

HONORING ST. HUGO OF THE HILLS IN BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICHIGAN

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. PETERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the selection of St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, as a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. This prestigious award is the highest honor bestowed by the United States Department of Education. That St. Hugo earned this designation is a testament to the dedication of its administration, teachers, staff, students, parents and community members, whose hard work of self-evaluation, review and goal-setting for the future has proved exemplary.

The Blue Ribbon Schools designation is reserved for schools that provide only the most rigorous academic programs or which have made only the most dramatic strides in improving their students' academic achievement. In fact, St. Hugo School was the only private school in Michigan to receive the award this year. St. Hugo of the Hills has a long-celebrated and exemplary tradition of striving for academic excellence, with standardized test scores that reflect a deep commitment to high achievement. St. Hugo of the Hills provides its students an outstanding program of nationally recognized excellence in an environment in which the teachings of the Catholic faith are instilled, nurtured and demonstrated. Since 1940, it is this combination that has enabled St. Hugo to count among its alumni scores of community leaders and dedicated, productive citizens.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my recognition of St. Hugo of the Hills on the honor of its outstanding achievement for being designated a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School.

CONGRESSMAN BOBBY L. RUSH
DAY

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus I rise today in honor of my colleague and fellow CBC member, the Honorable BOBBY L. RUSH. Throughout his distinguished career, Congressman RUSH has served as a determined leader for civil rights and a passionate advocate for our nation's least fortunate citizens and their communities. On Saturday, November 28th, Rev. Jesse Jackson and the RainbowPUSH Coalition will honor Congressman RUSH during "Bobby Rush Day," a celebration of his life and service.

Congressman RUSH was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1946 and spent his childhood growing up on the north and west sides of Chicago. As a child, his Boy Scout Master encouraged BOBBY to pursue public service. Congressman RUSH enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 17, which marked the beginning of what was to become a life-long career in public service. After serving honorably for 5 years, he left the Army to attend Roosevelt University, where he graduated with honors in 1973.

It was during this time that Congressman RUSH began his passionate advocacy for the basic civil and human rights of minorities, as a member of the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to serving as a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Congressman RUSH co-founded the Illinois Black Panther Party in 1968. With the Panther Party, Congressman RUSH organized the Free Breakfast for Children program and established a Free Medical Clinic, which gained renown as the nation's first to develop a mass sickle cell anemia testing program.

This commitment to the health and dignity of communities of color has been a remarkable trademark of Congressman RUSH's career in public service. After serving as an Alderman in the Chicago City Council for 8 years, Congressman RUSH was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1993 to serve Illinois' First Congressional District. Congressman RUSH has been a strong leader and vocal proponent for issues such as health care reform, job creation, environmental protection, gun control and ending the embargo against Cuba. Most recently, as Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, Congressman RUSH used his deft leadership to shepherd the bipartisan passage of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (H.R. 4040), which modernized the Consumer Product Safety Commission and established essential safety requirements for children's products.

An ordained Baptist minister, Congressman RUSH has remained true to the principles of truth and justice throughout his distinguished

career. Today we rise in appreciation, not only of his contributions to date, but in anticipation of that which he will accomplish in the future. He is, and continues to be, an inspiring advocate for equality and a voice for the voiceless.

The Congressional Black Caucus is stronger because of Congressman RUSH's diligent work. His clarity of purpose and vision reinforces the CBC's role as the "Conscience of the Congress." For that we are deeply grateful. We salute and celebrate this great leader for freedom and justice.

To all, we wish you a very happy "Bobby Rush Day!"

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I introduce the District of Columbia Medicaid Reimbursement Act of 2009 today to raise the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP), or contribution of the federal government from 70 percent to 75 percent, and to reduce the District's unique role as the only city, except for New York, that pays any portion of Medicaid, an expense that is carried by states and counties in our country. New York City, the jurisdiction that powers the economy of New York State, contributes a 25 percent local share to Medicaid, while the state pays 25 percent, less than the District's statutorily mandated 30 percent contribution. I introduce this bill because the District's continuing responsibility for the share of Medicaid costs typically borne by entire states is a major component of the District's structural deficit and a threat to the financial stability of the city itself, according to the District's Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Today, in the midst of an unprecedented recession and of structural change in the U.S. economy, this burden is not sustainable. Yet the District, unlike other cities which have lost significant populations, has no state economy to share this burden. More than 25 percent of District children and adults are enrolled in Medicaid, compared to 12 percent in Maryland and just 9 percent in Virginia. On average, the District spends over \$7,000 per enrollee, while Maryland and Virginia spend \$5,509 and \$5,177, respectively, reflecting serious health conditions that are concentrated among big city residents in this majority African American city.

In 1997, as part of the Balanced Budget Act, Congress recognized that state costs were too high for any one city to shoulder. To alleviate the resulting financial crisis in the District, Congress increased the federal Medicaid contribution to the District from 50 to 70 percent, and took responsibility for some, but not all, state costs—prisons and courts—relieving the immediate burden, but the city continues to carry most state costs.

In 1997, a formulaic error in the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) allotment reduced the 70 percent FMAP share, and as a result, the District received only \$23 million instead of the \$49 million due. I was able to secure a technical correction to the Balanced Budget Act of 1999, partially in-

creasing the annual allotment to \$32 million from FY2000 forward. I appreciate that in 2005, Congress responded to my effort to get an additional annual increase of \$20 million in the budget reconciliation bill, bringing DC's Medicaid reimbursement payments to \$57 million as intended by the Balanced Budget Act. However, this amount did not reimburse the District for the years a federal error denied the city part of its federal contribution, and in any case, of course, was not intended to meet the structural problem this bill partially addresses. Now, with health care before the Congress, the time has come to close the loop on this leftover issue.

The District has taken important steps on its own to reduce Medicaid costs through greater efficiency, and to treat and prevent conditions that prove costly when hospitalization or expensive treatments become necessary. The District Medicaid agency won federal recognition as one of only two Medicaid programs nationwide to exceed the federal government's child immunization goal for school-age children at 95 percent, and improved its fraud surveillance, recovering \$15 million in fraudulently billed funds. The city's novel DC Health Care Alliance, for which federal approval is pending, would allow coverage of residents and provide more early and preventative care, avoiding huge Medicaid costs when health conditions become severe and Medicaid becomes the only option.

The DC Medicaid Reimbursement Act of 2009 is the eighth in the "Free and Equal DC" series. This series of bills addresses inappropriate and often unequal restrictions placed only on the District and no other U.S. jurisdiction. Although today's bill cannot address the entire structural problem that the District faces because the city is not part of a state, the bill would at least make the city no worse off than the only other city that contributes to Medicaid.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this increase that will help my city's most needy residents.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. DOYLE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to inform my colleagues of an upcoming landmark event in Pennsylvania's 14th Congressional District—the 140th anniversary of Chatham University, one of the oldest women's colleges in the country.

On December 11, 1869, the Pennsylvania Female College was founded in the City of Pittsburgh by the Reverend William Trimble Beatty, the founder and pastor of the Shady Side Presbyterian Church. The college was originally housed in the Berry mansion on Woodland Road in Pittsburgh's Shadyside neighborhood. The college's original mission was to provide educational opportunities for women of comparable quality to those available at that time at the best colleges for men.

Chatham University is one of the outstanding institutions of higher learning that call the city of Pittsburgh home. For the past 140 years, this school has been committed to providing a high-quality education to young women. Chatham's motto is "Filiae nostrae

sicut antarii lapides"—"That our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace"—and for well over a century, the faculty and staff of this respected institution have labored hard to live up to that standard. Graduates have gone on to leadership roles in business, government, and academia locally and across the country. Chatham's most famous graduate so far is probably Rachel Carson, of the class of 1929—the individual almost single-handedly responsible for the birth of the environmental movement in this country.

Over the last 140 years, a number of traditions have become an important part of the school's identity—the Opening Convocation, the passing of the class colors from graduating seniors to the incoming first years, the song contest, May Day activities, and the Closing Convocation, to name a few. Needless to say, many alumnae retain treasured memories of these traditions for the rest of their lives—and while many wonderful traditions have been established and preserved, the school has changed and grown as well.

In 1890, the Pennsylvania Female College was renamed the Pennsylvania College for Women. Over the years, the student body grew and the school expanded into the buildings and grounds of several adjacent mansions, including those previously owned by Andrew Mellon, Edward Stanton Fickes, James Rea, and George M. Laughlin, Jr.

In 1955, the Pennsylvania College for Women was renamed Chatham College, in honor of William Pitt, the Elder—the first Earl of Chatham, the statesman who led Great Britain to victory in the Seven Years' War, and the man for whom Pittsburgh was named.

In 1992, Dr. Esther Barazzone became the school's 16th President, and under her leadership, the school has undergone substantial growth. New construction was undertaken, co-educational graduate programs were established, and the school's endowment was increased substantially.

On April 23, 2007, the school was granted university status by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and it officially changed its name to Chatham University a year later on May 1st, 2008.

Today, the university is home to three colleges. Chatham College for Women continues the school's original mission of providing a high-quality undergraduate education for women. The College for Continuing and Professional Studies offers a number of certificate, masters, and doctoral programs, and online degree programs were begun in 2005. The College for Graduate Studies offers masters' and doctoral programs for both women and men in more than 20 fields, including art, architecture, business, health sciences, teaching, and creative writing. In 2007, Chatham University's Creative Writing M.F.A. program was singled out by *The Atlantic Monthly* as one of the top five innovative and unique programs in the country. Today, Chatham has more than 2,200 students enrolled. The university is home to several outreach centers as well, including the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship, the Pennsylvania Center for Women, Politics, and Public Policy, the Rachel Carson Institute, and the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute.

In 2008, Chatham University expanded dramatically to accommodate the growth in a number of academic programs.