

served as president of the Florida Association of Colleges and Universities and chairman of the Independent Colleges and Universities. As a testament to her dedication to education, four Florida universities: Holy Cross College, University of Miami, Rollins College, and Lynn University, have conferred honorary degrees on Sister Jeanne, making her one of the most respected and loved educators in Florida's history.

Sister Jeanne has also been an advocate of revitalizing South Florida's economy. South Florida's power elite noticed her qualities and dedication and named Sister the first female member of two exclusive groups: The Orange Bowl Committee and the Non-Group. The Orange Bowl Committee is a group of dedicated, South Florida volunteers, who are committed to bringing tourism to South Florida through the annual college football game. Now, one of the four most prestigious college football bowl games in America, the Orange Bowl festivities bring in an excess of 150,000 visitors every year, which contribute to a thriving South Florida economy.

Despite all her dedication and hard work, even Sister Jeanne is susceptible to illness and in 1996, Sister was diagnosed with lung cancer. However, even this disease could not stop her determination. Following disclosing publicly her illness, Sister helped raise awareness and funds for the American Cancer Society.

Mr. Speaker, as a fellow lung cancer survivor, I know how difficult life seems after being diagnosed with such a terrible illness. For Sister Jeanne to continue her work like this is an inspiration to every cancer patient and survivor in America. I am also grateful to Sister for her thoughts and prayers during my illness earlier this year.

Sister Jeanne is a dear friend, and someone I am truly proud to know and love. Sister Jeanne's vision continues. Her love for Barry and South Florida is evident evermore. Under Sister Jeanne's supervision, Barry University is attempting the largest construction project in Miami Shores history. Nearly \$18 million will bring a new student center and residence hall to accommodate the growing student population, which Sister Jeanne has pushed to grow and expand ever since she took office.

Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of Florida's Congressional Delegation, I salute Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin for her 22 years as President of Barry University. May God bless Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin.

H.R. 2297, VETERANS BENEFITS
ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2297, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, contains myriad benefits for our nation's veterans, many of which are long overdue. The bill builds on education benefits by expanding the Montgomery GI Bill program, a successful program that will now include educational assistance for on the job training in certain self-employment programs. It also increases monthly educational benefits for spouses and

dependent children of veterans with permanent total disabilities, or who have died as a result of combat.

Among the housing benefits in the bill is a provision allowing remarried surviving spouses of veterans to be buried next to the veteran in a national cemetery, based on the original marriage. A prohibition on remarried spouses burial eligibility is unfair to many of the dedicated spouses who have faithfully supported their veterans for years. I was a cosponsor of the original bill for this measure and support its passage.

The section of the bill relating to benefits for former Prisoners of War contains a provision that will add cirrhosis of the liver to the list of presumed service-connected disabilities for former POWs. It also eliminates the unfair requirement that a POW must be held for at least 30 days to qualify for presumption of service-connection for certain disabilities, such as psychoses and states of anxiety. We owe it to our former POWs to repay them for what they have been through as much as we possibly can, and this provision is a step in that direction.

Yet another beneficial provision in this bill is the extension for six years of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. As a representative in a state with over 9,000 Native American veterans, and with over 17,200 Hispanic veterans in my district alone, I fully support this provision and believe it is a necessary step to the continued service to all minority veterans.

Another provision in the bill provides federal contracting officials the discretionary authority to award sole source contracts to small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. I am pleased that the Senate took out the "notwithstanding any other provision of law" phrase that was in the original version of H.R. 1460, from which the language for this provision of H.R. 2297 was taken. The language included in the original version of H.R. 1460 was very harmful to the 8(a) small business contract program, a program that benefits minority-owned small businesses all across this country. As a member of both the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and House Small Business Committee I worked to forge a suitable compromise that would ensure increased contracting opportunities for veteran-owned small businesses, while not harming the 8(a) program that has helped provide economic opportunity for minority entrepreneurs. With the help of the Chairmen and Ranking Members of both committees, we were able to unanimously pass an amended version of H.R. 1460.

Unfortunately the unanimously passed version of H.R. 1460 is not what is included in H.R. 2297 today, but neither is the originally damaging language of H.R. 1460 included in this bill. I do have remaining concerns about the effect of the included contracting provision on the 8(a) and other small business programs, but considering the numerous important provisions for our nation's veterans contained in this bill, I will vote in favor.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I strongly support increased opportunities for veteran entrepreneurs. In fact, with the support of Congresswoman SUE KELLY, I recently introduced H.R. 3483, the Seeds for Soldiers Act, to establish a loan program and a vocational rehabilitation program for veterans. As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Com-

mittee, I strongly support strengthening benefits for our Nation's veterans, who have fought so bravely to protect our country. I support the passage of H.R. 2297 and look forward to continuing work in the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to support our Nation's heroes.

LET'S GO LANCERS

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, while the Boston Red Sox failed to finally capture a World Series victory that has eluded them since 1918, another group of Hardball Heroes from Red Sox Nation did achieve their ultimate goal. The Malden Catholic Lancers defied all expectations, overcame every obstacle, and defeated every opponent to finish the year as Massachusetts Division One State Champions.

While Red Sox fans will have to wait until next year yet again, the Lancers fans can rejoice and celebrate the success of this young team of schoolyard superstars.

Mr. Speaker, today I join with faculty, students, my fellow alumni, and all members of the Malden Catholic community who are saying congratulations!

It was Coach Stephen Freker's guidance and leadership that fueled these young men as they drove to the championship. The National High School Baseball Coach's Association affirmed what we knew all along by naming Coach Freker New England's Coach of the Year.

These Lancers worked hard, practiced long, and gave their hearts and souls for the blue and gold all year long. While they are great individual players, their true greatness lies in their ability to play as team.

Mr. Speaker, this was our year.

Let's Go Lancers!

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GLENDALE GENERAL RICHARD GRIDLEY CHAPTER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the General Gridley Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on their 90th anniversary celebration.

Mrs. Mary Howard Gridley Braly founded the chapter on December 19, 1913. Mrs. Braly served as an organizing regent, and was later named Regent-For-Life by Chapter members. Mrs. Braly and her daughter first became members of the National Society of D.A.R. in 1983 in Highland Park, Illinois. Then recording Secretary General Miss Eugenia Washington, one of the D.A.R. founders, signed their applications.

The chapter is named for General Richard Gridley, ancestor of Mary's first husband James Conger Gridley. General Gridley was born in Boston in 1711. In 1745 he was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel of the Artillery in