

Madam Speaker, we want to honor Ben Stone today for his 20 years of service to Sonoma County and the Economic Development Board. He has made many friends in the many communities he serves and is always willing to give a boost to new arrivals or make that important contact for someone who needs assistance. As Ben always says to others, we wish him many more "Onward and Upward" years at the Sonoma County Economic Development Board.

INTRODUCING THE PRESCRIPTION
DRUG AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Prescription Drug Affordability Act. This legislation ensures that millions of Americans, including seniors, have access to affordable pharmaceutical products. My bill makes pharmaceuticals more affordable to seniors by reducing their taxes. It also removes needless government barriers to importing pharmaceuticals and it protects Internet pharmacies, which are making affordable prescription drugs available to millions of Americans, from being strangled by federal regulation.

The first provision of my legislation provides seniors a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their prescription drug costs. While Congress did add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare in 2003, many seniors still have difficulty affording the prescription drugs they need in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. One reason is because the new program creates a "doughnut hole," where seniors lose coverage once their prescription expenses reach a certain amount and must pay for their prescriptions above a certain amount out of their own pockets until their expenses reach a level where Medicare coverage resumes. This tax credit will help seniors cover the expenses provided by the doughnut hole. This bill will also help seniors obtain prescription medicines that may not be covered by the Medicare prescription drug program.

In addition to making prescription medications more affordable for seniors, my bill lowers the price for prescription medicines by reducing barriers to the importation of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals. Under my bill, anyone wishing to import a drug simply submits an application to the FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S. or is adulterated or misbranded. This process will make safe and affordable imported medicines affordable to millions of Americans. Madam Speaker, letting the free market work is the best means of lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

I need not remind my colleagues that many senior citizens and other Americans impacted by the high costs of prescription medicine have demanded Congress reduce the barriers which prevent American consumers from purchasing imported pharmaceuticals. Congress has responded to these demands by repeatedly passing legislation liberalizing the rules governing the importation of pharmaceuticals. However, implementation of this provision has been blocked by the federal bureaucracy. It is

time Congress stood up for the American consumer and removed all unnecessary regulations on importing pharmaceuticals.

The Prescription Drug Affordability Act also protects consumers' access to affordable medicine by forbidding the Federal Government from regulating any Internet sales of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals by state-licensed pharmacists.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Internet makes pharmaceuticals and other products more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. However, the federal government has threatened to destroy this option by imposing unnecessary and unconstitutional regulations on web sites that sell pharmaceuticals. Any federal regulations would inevitably drive up prices of pharmaceuticals, thus depriving many consumers of access to affordable prescription medications.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make pharmaceuticals more affordable and accessible by lowering taxes on senior citizens, removing barriers to the importation of pharmaceuticals and protecting legitimate Internet pharmacies from needless regulation by cosponsoring the Prescription Drug Affordability Act.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL DESIGNATED AS MAGNET HOSPITAL BY THE AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, December 20, 2006, the University of Kansas Hospital became the first hospital in Kansas to attain the coveted Magnet™ designation. The Department of Nursing began working toward this goal in 2002.

Since the American Nurses Credentialing Center developed the Magnet Recognition Program® in 1990, approximately 225 facilities—less than 3 percent of all hospitals—have attained Magnet designation. To join this exclusive group, both the nursing staff and hospital have demonstrated their ability to meet and exceed more than 150 professional standards of excellence.

Magnet designation recognizes the quality and importance of our nursing department. It also emphasizes the important role our nurses play in the hospital's success. Magnet hospitals exemplify the very best in patient care and outcomes. Just 3.5 percent of health care organizations are Magnet hospitals.

This designation proves the commitment of the University of Kansas Hospital to excellent patient care outcomes. Magnet designation means a hospital outperforms others and is statistically proven to have: higher quality care; better patient outcomes; lower mortality rate; significantly higher levels of patient satisfaction; salaries typically above average; excellent nursing recruitment; higher nursing retention; and greater consumer confidence. Madam Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to bring this noteworthy designation to your attention, and to the attention of the House of Representatives as a whole.

PROTECTING IMPACT AID FOR
NORTH SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to ensure the federal government fulfills an important obligation to the families of servicemen and women in my district. In 1950, President Harry Truman established the Impact Aid program to assist school districts and communities that lose their property tax base because of the presence of the federal government. Without this federal money, the burden would fall to the remaining residents whose property taxes would continue to rise while impacting the quality of education which can be provided. The Impact Aid program helps to alleviate this problem by directly reimbursing public school districts for the loss of traditional revenue sources.

For years Impact Aid was fully funded and offered some of the strongest direct assistance to military families across the nation. Unfortunately, over the last decade we have fallen behind on this commitment, and it is time to reverse this trend.

While I support fully funding the Impact Aid program, I believe the situation in my district warrants special attention. In order to ensure that our students most in need continue to receive necessary resources, I have introduced this bill to help North Chicago to continue to qualify for heavily impacted payments, and Glenview and Highland Park receive fair compensation.

Due to a unique housing situation for the Great Lakes Naval Training Facility, Impact Aid funding should be higher in five of my school districts. This Naval base is located in North Chicago, one of the poorest school districts in my state. However, some service members and their families live in Navy housing obtained when Ft. Sheridan and Naval Air Station Glenview, located in other suburbs, were closed in the 1990's. These former bases are located within the boundaries of other school districts that now must bear the economic cost of educating children from a base, but receive none of the economic benefits a base provides. Thus, it is vitally important that we both ensure North Chicago continues to receive heavily impacted payments for the benefit of students living there, and that the surrounding communities are more fairly compensated for their loss of property taxes.

By passing this bill, the federal government will be fulfilling its responsibility to these communities, and giving our military families the support they deserve.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND RETIREMENT OF CHARLES E. COOKE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of a valued staff member—Charles E. Cooke—who retired this month from the