Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.

Mr. Sorrentino has led a staff of 95 engineering technical and clerical personnel responsible for the right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, geotechnical, survey, traffic and municipal service functions of PennDot District 6–0.

Throughout his long career with PennDot, Mr. Sorrentino has shown leadership and dedication as a structural designer in the highway design unit, as chief project manager in the Philadelphia interstate office, as district soils engineer, and as administrator of the project management unit. He has also played a key role in the design, community coordination, and implementation of such major area highways as I–95, I–76 rehabilitation, I–476 and I–676.

Mr. Sorrentino will retire from service to PennDot on January 13 to enjoy more time with his wife Martha and three sons: Frank Jr., David, and Brian. I applaud and thank him for his commitment to the Pennsylvania transportation system.

Further, I commend him for his ability, dedication and pursuit of excellence in public service upon his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO DET. LT. DANIEL PATERSON III OF THE FERNDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 11, 1995

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished service of Det. Lt. Daniel Paterson III of the Ferndale Police Department.

Lieutenant Paterson has devoted over 29 years of service to the people of Ferndale. These 29 years of service have been marked by numerous promotions, and 13 different awards and commendations. For the past 8 years he has directed the detective bureau of the department.

Mr. Speaker, I can attest to the excellence of the Ferndale Police Department, and I am certain Lieutenant Paterson played a role in making it so.

I am privileged to join his family, friends, and colleagues in thanking him for 29 years of service and wish him a restful and rewarding retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 448

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 11, 1995

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, arachnoiditis easily qualifies as a disease of the nineties. It has been described as ''the greatest enigma in the field of spinal surgery'' with few surgeons ever having seen it, and even fewer knowing how to treat it. In simple terms, arachnoiditis means inflammation of the arachnoid, and is characterized by chronic inflammation and thickening of the arachnoid matter, the middle of the three membranes that cover and protect the brain and spinal cord.

Arachnoiditis may develop up to several years after an episode of meningitis or subarachnoid hemorrhage—bleeding beneath the arachnoid. It may be a feature in diseases and disorders such a syphilis or it may result from trauma during a diagnostic procedure known as a myelogram. According to the Arachnoiditis Information and Support Network, more than 600,000 myelograms are performed in this country every year. Of the 12 million Americans who suffer from arachnoiditis, the cases resulting from myelograms could have been avoided.

In a myelogram, a radiopaque dye is injected into the spinal subarachnoid space. After the x-ray examination, as much of the oil as possible is withdrawn; however, a small amount is left behind and is slowly absorbed. Studies have implicated the iodized oil contrast medium, Pantopaque, in arachnoiditis. Water-soluble dyes such as Amipaque, Omipaque, and Isovue were once thought to be safer for use; however, recent evidence proves they also cause arachnoiditis. In fact, Harry Feffer, professor of orthopedic surgery at George Washington University states that patients who have had two or more myelograms stand a 50 percent chance of developing arachnoiditis. Numerous studies on animals have confirmed these findings.

Symptoms of arachnoiditis include chronic severe pain and a burning sensation which may attack the back, groin, leg, knee, or foot and can result in loss of movement to almost total disability. Other symptoms include bladder, bowel, thyroid, and sexual disfunction, as well as headaches, epileptic seizures, blindness, and progressive spastic paralysis affecting the legs and arms.

In the past few years, arachnoiditis sufferers and Members of Congress alike have repeatedly asked the FDA to recall the use of Pantopaque. The FDA has clearly not reviewed the safety of oil-based Pantopaque as well as water-based dyes, in spite of medical evidence. As a result, I have introduced H.R. 448, a bill to ban myelograms involving the use of Pantopaque, Amipaque, Omipaque, or Isovue.

This legislation is not a new idea. Since 1990, Britain and Sweden have banned the use of Pantopaque in myelograms. In fact, a class action suit is still pending in Britain consisting of 25,000 people, 1,500 of which are nurses. In 1986, Kodak, the company that makes Pantopaque, voluntarily stopped distributing the drug in the United States due to public pressure. Pantopaque has a 5-year shelf life. The last batch was due to expire April 1, 1991. However, the use of Pantopaque has continued, with the most recent documented case in September 1993 and hospitals stocking the dye as recent as April 1994.

A large number of medical professionals do not know how to diagnose myelogram-related arachnoiditis, and when they do, they cannot treat it. Medical journals and case studies from around the world document the connection between radiopaque dyes and arachnoiditis. Despite this document, the medical profession as a whole has not been effectively enforced and still persists in its use. Moreover, the lack of information prevents the physician from recognizing the disease or side effects of the residual dyes after the fact. The time has come for thorough research to study this painful, disabling condition. H.R. 448 will direct the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to estimate the number of Americans suffering from myelogram-related arachnoiditis and determine the extent of this relationship.

Every year, chronic back pain is responsible for billions of dollars in lost revenues and millions more in health care costs. The American Journal reports that chronic low-back pain is estimated to cost $16 billion annually in the United States Occupational research finds that back injuries, pain and complications cost an average of $15,000 per incident. According to ''The Power of Pain,'' by Shirley Kraus, 100 million Americans are either permanently disabled or are less productive due to back pain. Those who do work lose about 5 work days per year, a productivity loss of $55 billion. Interestingly enough, these figures only refer to chronic back pain patients. Almost all arachnoiditis sufferers eventually become totally disabled, becoming permanent fixtures on the rolls of Social Security, disability, welfare, and Medicaid.

Arachnoiditis sufferers want to become functioning, contributing members of society again. H.R. 448 will provide research for treatments for arachnoiditis sufferers, including treatments to manage pain. Pain-management treatments would enable sufferers to once again become active, working members of society.

It's time to protect unsuspecting Americans from this debilitating and preventable condition. I ask Members of Congress to join me by cosponsoring H.R. 448.

SERVICE AND COMMITMENT TO EASTERN LONG ISLAND

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 11, 1995

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, Edward V. Ecker, Sr. of Montauk, Long Island, NY, a community in my congressional district, continues to live the classic American dream in his very full life, and so it is with pleasure that we honor him for his ongoing and outstanding service and commitment to the east end. Mr. Ecker's list of accomplishments and friends reads like a Who's Who: from his youth to the present.

Mr. Eckert, a graduate of Montauk School, went on to be a star athlete at East Hampton High School and later attended Syracuse University on a football scholarship. After a tour of duty with the Army in the Korean war, he came home and worked as a probation officer. His gregarious, loving nature has held him in good stead throughout the years as a very popular elected official and recognized political pro.

As an East Hampton town supervisor and town councilman, he was the youngest in New York State. In addition he was the commissioner of jurors and the deputy commissioner of Suffolk County parks.

When his lifelong friend, Perry B. Duryea, Jr. ran for the State Assembly in 1960 and was elected speaker in 1969—the last Republican speaker of that body—Eddie Ecker was a key strategist and top advisor.

Currently he is assistant deputy commissioner of the Suffolk County Board of Elections and is a Republican committeeman, having once been the Republican town leader.

For 47 years he has been a Montauk volunteer fireman. He also served as fire police captain. For 29 years he had been the master of ceremony for the St. Patrick Parade in Montauk, as well as serving as past grand marshal.

Many of us are regular listeners of Ed's as he broadcasts high school sports weekends over Radio Eastern Long Island, WLNG. In the entertainment world he appeared in several movies—''Joe vs. Volcano,'' ''Awakenings,'' and Woody Allen's ''Manhattan Murder Mystery''—and a number of commercials including one for Prudential Life and Ray Ban sunglass. Business Week magazine also ran a feature article on Mr. Ecker.

Eddie Ecker has been a friend and a big influence in my life. He got me started over 20 years ago as an aid to Speaker Duryea. I've learned a lot about politics and government from Eddie. It is a point of high personal privilege to have this opportunity to stand with my colleagues in the 104th Congress in the first in 40 years to have a Republican majority—to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of our own ''Mr. Republican.'' Eddie Ecker, a man whose love for family, for country, and for community serves as a bavon for us all. God bless you, Eddie.

THE FHA MODERNIZATION AND EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1995

HON. BILL ORTON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 11, 1995

Mr. ORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the FHA Modernization and Efficiency Act of 1995.

The purpose of this legislation is to make a number of changes to the FHA single family mortgage loan program to make it more responsive to market needs, and to provide for more efficient administration within the FHA. The bill contains many of the provisions found in H.R. 4484, a bill I introduced in the 103d Congress.

Six of the seven provisions in this bill are identical to the provisions the House adopted last year in H.R. 3838, the housing reauthorization bill. Since the Senate failed to act on this legislation, it is incumbent on Congress to take these matters up again.

As the current Congress convenes, there has been some talk of privatizing or eliminating the FHA single family loan program. I believe this would be a mistake. FHA has served as an invaluable source of low downpayment mortgages to enable young families and individuals to enter the housing market. As this Congress increasingly emphasizes policies which promote opportunities, there is hardly a better example of a Federal program which provides opportunities than the FHA Single Family Mortgage Loan Program.

Furthermore, there appears to be no good fiscal or public policy argument for transferring FHA operations to the private sector. The FHA single family Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund [MMIF] is very healthy. Moreover, since the program is currently running a surplus, we would not cut Government spending by privatizing the program.

However, privatization or elimination would likely result in significantly less competition in the market for low downpayment mortgage loans. It is likely that a private company would not have either the congressional mandate or incentive to serve the affordable, low downpayment single family market in the same way FHA has historically done, through all market conditions, good and bad. It is hard to see how less competition would be better for the consumer.

However, it is also true that FHA suffers from a problem typical of Government agencies—a failure to adapt quickly to market changes and make internal efficiency improvements. While private companies can make changes in programs at a moment's notice, FHA is subject to programmatic restrictions by Congress that have not been updated for some time.

The FHA Modernization and Efficiency Act is an effort to make these needed changes. I believe that with the passage of the provisions in this bill, FHA can continue to be a fiscally sound, responsive provider of affordable single family loans.

First, let me address the provisions in my bill which make FHA loans more responsive to market conditions. A commonly cited impediment to use of FHA is the extraordinarily complex down payment calculation for FHA mortgages. Under current statute, borrowers, lenders, and realtors are forced to go through a convoluted two-part calculation to determine the maximum amount that can be financed, and the corresponding down payment required by FHA.

Under section 4 of my bill, this complexity would be replaced by a simple one-part formula, based on the size of the loan. For properties with a value up to $50,000, the loan could not exceed 98.75 percent of appraised value. For properties between $50,000 and $125,000, the loan could not exceed 97.65 percent of appraised value. Finally, for loans over $125,000, the loan could not exceed 97.15 percent of appraised value. In each case, the borrower could also finance mortgage premiums—as under current policy—but could not finance closing costs.

This measure was adopted as an amendment on the House floor last year by voice vote, with bipartisan support. The proposal was painstakingly developed to be as neutral as possible in comparison to current law with respect to the general levels of downpayments required by FHA. To achieve this, we also added a provision for high closing cost States, where we permit loans of up to 97.75 percent of value. This is because current law generally allows higher loan-to-value ratios for transactions with high closing costs. Finally, in a letter dated July 21, 1994, during House consideration of this proposal, the Commissioner of the FHA wrote me a letter in support of this proposal, stating that ''We concur with your assessment that the new proposal will simplify the process for calculating the maximum mortgage amount available on single family properties and fully support it.''

A second provision on my bill, section 6, makes the FHA program more flexible by eliminating the current prohibition against parental loans used in conjunction with FHA mortgages. Under current FHA policy, parents may assist children with downpayment assistance, but only if they submit a gift letter indicating that the assistance is not to be repayed. While prohibitions against loans for downpayments generally make fiscal sense, there is no reason to have this policy in the case of a parental loan. There is no practical difference between a parental gift and a parental loan. There would be no added risk to the FHA fund by eliminating this parental loan prohibition.

This change would permit many more families and individuals to enter the housing market. It would also end the common practice whereby many parents are forced to lie about the true nature of financial assistance, stating in the gift letter that no repayment is expected, when in fact there is a private agreement that the loan shall be repayed. This provision was adopted in committee by voice vote and included in H.R. 3838 last year. I believe this change is both family-friendly and noncontroversial.

A third important provision in my bill, section 9, would provide for FHA authority to insure 2-step mortgages. This type of mortgage allows the borrower, for example, to have a 30-year term, with a 5-year fixed rate of interest, followed by periodic reset(s) of interest rates according to a formula. This mortgage vehicle has become increasing popular in recent years among private lenders, since it provides for more flexibility and lower rates for borrowers. In order to keep pace with market innovations, FHA should have the same capability. This provision was also adopted in committee by voice vote and included in H.R. 3838 last year.

A fourth provision in my bill, section 3, is probably the only controversial provision in the entire bill. This is the provision which raises the single family loan floor to 50 percent of the maximum Freddie Mac loan amount. This would permit loans of up to $101,150 in any place in the country, regardless of the average median home price. This is an important simplification provision for many smaller communities throughout the country, and was included in the bill which passed the House. However, I recognize that a smaller floor increase was adopted into law, in the VA-HUD appropriations bill. I believe that that increase was too small, and propose that we move the same loan floor we passed in the House last year.

In addition to changes needed to modernize the program, there are a number of changes we should make, to make administration of the FHA program more efficient. Perhaps the most significant is section 8 of my bill, which permits direct endorsement lenders to issue their own mortgage certificates. Several years ago, we took the important step of delegating underwriting decisions to qualified lenders, subject to strict FHA criteria as to LTV, appraisals, and other matters. However, the physical issuance of the certificates was still left in the hands of HUD. This is an unnecessary burden on HUD, and has resulted on long, and sometimes costly delays for lenders. The provision in my bill, developed by HUD and included in the housing bill we passed last year, would simply let lenders issue their own certificates. This would not represent any threat to the fund, since lenders would still be subject to the same scrutiny by HUD.

Finally, there are two other efficiency changes that we should make to streamline the FHA program and make it more efficient. Section 5 of my bill would remove an outdated 90 percent loan-to-value prohibition that applies to newly constructed homes that were