

Iran-Contra controversy. Without his steadfast help, unwavering encouragement and good counsel, the long ordeal of 1986-1989 could well have been an unbearable burden for my family and me.

And later it was Gen. Bronars who encouraged me to start Freedom Alliance; the 5091(c)(3) non-profit, charitable and educational organization I founded in 1990. In March 1991, Gen. Bronars became the chairman of the board of Freedom Alliance and served in that capacity until his death.

At Freedom Alliance, Gen. Bronars led Operation Homefront, a campaign which supplied over 125,000 care packages to the men and women serving in the Persian Gulf War. He also originated the HEROes Scholarship Program (Honoring, Educating, and Remembering Our Survivors) which provided up to \$10,000 in educational grants to the surviving family members of Gulf war casualties, and the CAST Program (Casualty Assistance Support Team), a \$50,000 grant from Freedom Alliance, administered by military chaplains to assist family members in visiting their loved ones in military hospitals as a result of wounds in the Persian Gulf War.

Gen. Bronars also became a public advocate for the readiness and integrity of the U.S. Armed Forces. He testified before the Bush administration's Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, and with the voice of experience, warned of the dangers in placing women directly into the horror of combat. He did the same in opposing the Clinton administration's proposals regarding homosexuals in our armed forces.

And with all of this, he still devoted time to the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund and the Young Marines program for at-risk youth. In all he did, Ed Bronars sought no recognition, no honor, no praise for countless hours of toil and trouble. In every event his good humor would prevail over the naysayers, his perseverance inspired the weary and his friendship offset the adversaries.

Many knew Ed Bronars as a great leader. A good number knew he was a steadfast patriot. A handful knew him as a war hero. The beautiful Dot Bronars knew him as her husband. Bruce and Bobbi knew him as their Dad. I was blessed to have him as a faithful friend. Semper Fidelis, we'll miss you, Ed!

INTRODUCTION OF SENATE-PASSED MENTAL HEALTH PARITY ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 1996

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing today the identical bill the Senate passed on September 5 by 82-15, offered by Senator DOMENICI, WELLSTONE, and many others, to provide mental health lifetime and annual cap parity.

I would like to see much more extensive mental health legislation passed. I would like to see an elimination of all caps, in both physical and mental health, but this bill is a step forward, has widespread support, and is the least we can and should do in this Congress.

If the House can pass identical legislation this month, this incremental health reform could become law this year and begin to help innumerable families who face the crisis of paying for mental health needs.

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Mental Health Parity Act of 1996".

SEC. 2. PLAN PROTECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS.

(a) PERMISSIBLE COVERAGE LIMITS UNDER A GROUP HEALTH PLAN.—

(1) AGGREGATE LIFETIME LIMITS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a group health plan offered by a health insurance issuer, that applies an aggregate lifetime limit to plan payments for medical or surgical services covered under the plan, if such plan also provides a mental health benefit such plan shall—

(i) include plan payments made for mental health services under the plan in such aggregate lifetime limit; or

(ii) establish a separate aggregate lifetime limit applicable to plan payments for mental health services under which the dollar amount of such limit (with respect to mental health services) is equal to or greater than the dollar amount of the aggregate lifetime limit on plan payments for medical or surgical services.

(B) NO LIFETIME LIMIT.—With respect to a group health plan offered by a health insurance issuer, that does not apply an aggregate lifetime limit to plan payments for medical or surgical services covered under the plan, such plan may not apply an aggregate lifetime limit to plan payments for mental health services covered under the plan.

(2) ANNUAL LIMITS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a group health plan offered by a health insurance issuer, that applies an annual limit to plan payments for medical or surgical services covered under the plan, if such plan also provides a mental health benefit such plan shall—

(i) include plan payments made for mental health services under the plan in such annual limit; or

(ii) establish a separate annual limit applicable to plan payments for mental health services under which the dollar amount of such limit (with respect to mental health services) is equal to or greater than the dollar amount of the annual limit on plan payments for medical or surgical services.

(B) NO ANNUAL LIMIT.—With respect to a group health plan offered by a health insurance issuer, that does not apply an annual limit to plan payments for medical or surgical services covered under the plan, such plan may not apply an annual limit to plan payments for mental health services covered under the plan.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting a group health plan offered by a health insurance issuer, from—

(A) utilizing other forms of cost containment not prohibited under subsection (a); or

(B) applying requirements that make distinctions between acute care and chronic care.

(2) NONAPPLICABILITY.—This section shall not apply to—

(A) substance abuse or chemical dependency benefits; or

(B) health benefits or health plans paid for under title XVIII or XIX of the Social Security Act.

(3) STATE LAW.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preempt any State law that provides for greater parity with respect to mental health benefits than that required under this section.

(c) SMALL EMPLOYER EXEMPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This section shall not apply to plans maintained by employers that employ less than 26 employees.

(2) APPLICATION OF CERTAIN RULES IN DETERMINATION OF EMPLOYER SIZE.—For purposes of this subsection—

(A) APPLICATION OF AGGREGATION RULE FOR EMPLOYERS.—All persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be treated as 1 employer.

(B) EMPLOYERS NOT IN EXISTENCE IN PRECEDING YEAR.—In the case of an employer which was not in existence throughout the preceding calendar year, the determination of whether such employer is a small employer shall be based on the average number of employees that it is reasonably expected such employer will employ on business days in the current calendar year.

(C) PREDECESSORS.—Any reference in this subsection to an employer shall include a reference to any predecessor of such employer.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this title:

(1) GROUP HEALTH PLAN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term "group health plan" means an employee welfare benefit plan (as defined in section 3(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974) to the extent that the plan provides medical care (as defined in paragraph (2)) and including items and services paid for as medical care) to employees or their dependents (as defined under the terms of the plan) directly or through insurance, reimbursement, or otherwise.

(B) MEDICAL CARE.—The term "medical care" means amounts paid for—

(i) the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, or amounts paid for the purpose of affecting any structure or function of the body.

(ii) amounts paid for transportation primarily for and essential to medical care referred to in clause (i), and

(iii) amounts paid for insurance covering medical care referred to in clauses (i) and (ii).

(2) HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE.—The term "health insurance coverage" means benefits consisting of medical care (provided directly, through insurance or reimbursement, or otherwise and including items and services paid for as medical care) under any hospital or medical service policy or certificate, hospital or medical service plan contract, or health maintenance organization contract offered by a health insurance issuer.

(3) HEALTH INSURANCE ISSUER.—The term "health insurance issuer" means an insurance company, insurance service, or insurance organization (including a health maintenance organization, as defined in paragraph (4)) which is licensed to engage in the business of insurance in a State and which is subject to State law which regulates insurance (within the meaning of section 514(b)(2) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974), and includes a plan sponsor described in section 3(16)(B) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 in the case of a group health plan which is an employee welfare benefit plan (as defined in section 3(1) of such Act). Such term does not include a group health plan.

(4) HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION.—The term "health maintenance organization" means—

(A) a federally qualified health maintenance organization (as defined in section 1301(a) of the Public Health Service Act).

(B) an organization recognized under State law as a health maintenance organization, or

(C) a similar organization regulated under State law for solvency in the same manner

and to the same extent as such a health maintenance organization.

(5) STATE.—The term "State" means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

SEC. 4. SUNSET.

Sections 1 through 3 shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2001.

SEC. 5. FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM.

For the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program, sections 1 through 3 will take effect on October 1, 1997.

LORET RUPPE: AN UNSELFISH CIVIL SERVANT WITH A VISION

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 1996

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as the attached excerpts from an Economist obituary indicate, Loret Ruppe was an extraordinarily effective, dedicated, and public-service oriented leader for one of America's most optimistic programs, the Peace Corps. Her leadership of that Agency helped instill in it her own dedication and desire to help those most in need of America's can-do spirit.

As Director of the Peace Corps, Loret Ruppe worked with this Member to facilitate cooperation between that important program and the highly successful, Farmer-to-Farmer Program. The marriage of these two American technical assistance programs insures that Loret Ruppe's outstanding legacy continues in all those villages and out-of-the-way places where her Peace Corps and Farmer-to-Farmer soldiers spread the positive results of her optimism and determination.

[From the Economist, Aug. 24, 1996]

LORET RUPPE

When Loret Ruppe was made director of America's Peace Corps in 1981, it was probably the least attractive of political appointments in the gift of the president. "We called it the peace corpse," recalls a diplomat embarrassed by young Americans dumped in, say, an African village and expected to promote western ideas. Ronald Reagan, the new broom who in 1980 had swept away the Democrats, was prepared formally to bury the corpse. But Mrs. Ruppe, a prominent Republican who had been leader of the Reagan-Bush campaign in Michigan, wanted the job, and Mr. Reagan was happy, though surprised, to repay a political debt cheaply. If she finished it off, no one would be too bothered.

To some, Mrs. Ruppe seemed as naive as her new charges. She was approaching middle age, a mother hen with five daughters, adept at Republican money-raising, but with no foreign experience. But delve deeper. Mrs. Ruppe's mother was an anti-nuclear campaigner who alarmed her family by camping out on the bomb-testing grounds in Nevada. And she had been an admirer of President Kennedy, like her (and Mrs. Ruppe) a Roman Catholic, who had created the Peace Corps in 1961.

So there was a seed, and it germinated. Mrs. Ruppe decided that the Peace Corps was a good idea that had been discredited by its Kennedy-minded sloppiness. The Peace Corps had been the one fresh project that Kennedy had brought to the presidency. He called it his "winning number". He visualized the many thousands of students who had sup-

ported him during his election campaign as "soldiers of peace". He contrasted them with "ugly American" ambassadors who "lacked compassion." In his inaugural address in 1961 Kennedy said that the Peace Corps would help those "in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery." For poor countries this was a hurtfully condescending message from a fat cat. They wanted money and investment, not what a critic of Kennedy called "some Harvard boy or Vassar girl" who "lives in a mud hut and speaks Swahili".

KENNEDY'S CHILDREN

In fact, few in the early days of the Peace Corps had equipped themselves even with fluency in a second language before setting forth. Many were innocents abroad. Wise minds in the Kennedy circle did advise caution in the selection of recruits. Notwithstanding, they said, the admirable enthusiasm of the thousands of Americans who applied by every post to be allowed to help the miserable Africans and Asians, they should have appropriate skills and a degree of maturity. But the average age of Kennedy's Peace Corps "children", as they came to be called, was an unmaturing 21.

The corps that Mrs. Ruppe took over in 1981 had shrunk from 15,000 in the 1960s to about 5,000. In the previous decade seven directors had come and gone. The corps budget had been cut, and cut again. The Soviet Union said, perhaps correctly, that the corps was a weapon in the cold war; in those days nearly everything was. The corps, Mrs. Ruppe recalled later, was in "the least liked, least supported, least respected" part of the United States budget.

At first Mrs. Ruppe took no salary. This was no hardship for her—she came from a wealthy family of brewers—but the gesture was well received. The many liberals in the corps, initially hostile to a Reagan appointee, were won over by her clear belief in the movement and her sensible management. She ensured that anyone sent to the 90 or so countries served by the corps had a skill to offer, most commonly in agriculture as the majority of the world's poor are peasants, but there was, too, a wide range of expertise available, from nursing to computers. These days the average age of members is 29. Some are over 50, bringing to their tasks years of experience. Under Mrs. Ruppe the corps gained flexibility: sometimes a farmer, or a doctor or an engineer, will take a sabbatical from his regular job to spend some useful time overseas. The present director, Mark Gearan, said that Mrs. Ruppe was "the driving force" in its revitalization.

Kennedy's "winning number" has spread far beyond the bounds of his New Frontier. These days all the rich countries have dozens of organisations that send volunteers abroad to poor and not-so-poor countries. Some of them are government-supported, although many are private, relying on charity. In France, voluntary work abroad has been acceptable as an alternative to military service. Such schemes are generally regarded as a Good Thing, perhaps suspiciously so. This year, keeping 6,529 Peace Corps people in the field will cost America \$219m, about \$33,500 a person, a good deal less than the expense of running the most junior diplomat. Neither is Peace Corps work solely altruistic. For a Peace Corps scientist specialising in, say, pest control, Africa is a laboratory not available at home. As a result, the rich world becomes subtly richer. In 1989, after eight years as director of the corps, Mrs. Ruppe became ambassador to Norway, Washington's reward to one of its least-ugly Americans.

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR M.SGT. FREDRICK D. HAM

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 1996

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Senior M. Sgt. Fredrick D. Ham who is retiring from the U.S. Air Force at McClellan AFB, CA.

Senior Master Sergeant Ham has completed 26 years of dedicated service to our country. As a senior master sergeant, leader, and finally as a respected first sergeant assigned to the 77th Communications Squadron at McClellan Air Force Base, CA, he has provided dedicated and distinguished service.

Today as we honor his retirement, we reflect on the outstanding career which Fred started in October 1970 when he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Upon completion of basic training at Lackland AFB, TX, Lackland became his first permanent duty assignment. While there, he performed duties as an interior electrician until cross-training into the work control career field in 1972.

In December 1972, he was assigned to Torrejon AFB, Spain, where he worked as an in-service work programmer, controller, scheduler, quality control technician, service call NCOIC, and NCOIC of customer service. In 1982, he traveled stateside to Kirtland AFB, NM. Selected for promotion to master sergeant in 1983, he attended the First Sergeant Academy. He was selected honor graduate of his class.

In 1986, Fred again went overseas to Bitburgh AB, Germany, where he was first sergeant of the 36th Aircraft Generation Squadron and 36th Equipment Maintenance Squadron. While there, in February 1988, he attended the NCO Academy at Kapaun AS, Germany (class honor graduate) and was the winner of the John L. Levitow award. That same year, he was selected as Bitburgh's First Sergeant of the Year.

In 1990, he was assigned to McClellan AFB, where he served as the first sergeant of the 77th Communications Squadron until his retirement. In April 1992, he graduated from the Senior NCO Academy as a distinguished graduate while earning honors as the Military Studies Award Winner.

In 1994, Fred was selected as the McClellan AFB First Sergeant of the Year.

Senior Master Sergeant Ham is married to the former Diane Huse of Chicago, IL. They have a daughter Rebecca, who resides in Othello, WA, and two grandsons, Matthew, 6 and Dustin, 2.

Fred D. Ham's career reflects a commitment to our Nation, characterized by dedicated selfless service, love for the Air Force and commitment to excellence. Senior Master Sergeant Ham's performance, over a quarter of a century of service, personifies the traits of courage, competency, and integrity that our Nation has come to expect from its first sergeants. On behalf of the Congress of the United States and the people of this great Nation, I offer our heartfelt appreciation and best wishes for a first sergeant who served his country so admirably.