

asthmatic, crawling through the smoke was difficult, but Stephanie did not hesitate to take the risk and through her courage saved the lives of three children.

In this day and age when genuine heroes are all too rare in our society, Stephanie dismisses attention to her feat by calling it "just part of my job as a babysitter." Such modesty is yet another admirable trait of this extraordinary young woman. As her Representative in the U.S. House, I rise today to honor Stephanie Wenderoth as a true hometown hero.

IMMIGRATION IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2202) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to improve deterrence of illegal immigration to the United States by increasing border patrol and investigative personnel, by increasing penalties for alien smuggling and for document fraud, by reforming exclusion and deportation law and procedures, by improving the verification system for eligibility for employment, and through other measures, to reform the legal immigration system and facilitate legal entries into the United States, and for other purposes:

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Smith amendment to the Immigration in the National Interest Act. I want to commend him for his commitment to this issue and for offering this important amendment. It is crucial to the safety and security of those trying to escape terrible regimes and to this Nation's international leadership role on asylum.

America must continue to shoulder its international responsibility to afford asylum to its fair share of those who are repressed and are at risk in their countries. As a Nation of immigrants, we must leave our door open and continue to admit those persons fleeing from places which do not practice the values and beliefs we hold so dear. At the same time, it is clear that the United States cannot admit all those who would want to come here for solely economic reasons. However, we have a duty to those who seek admittance for humanitarian reasons. The United States has traditionally accepted refugees not for the economic and social reasons but because refugees are usually in grave danger.

H.R. 2202 would limit annual refugee admissions to 75,000 in fiscal year 1997 and 50,000 every year thereafter. This represents a significant decrease from the 98,000 refugees and no legitimate rationale has been given as to why this level was achieved. This would require drastic reductions in the number of former Soviet Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, Vietnamese, Bosnians, and Cubans, Chinese, and Africans.

The current refugee resettlement system works by allowing the executive and legislative branch to consult on an annual basis on what the appropriate levels should be. This provides greater flexibility and the ability to respond to changes which occur throughout the world

with refugees. On the other hand, the cap in the bill is inflexible and will not provide us with appropriate mechanisms to respond to refugee developments. Congress already has control over the number of refugees through the budget process. If we believe the administration's estimated levels are inappropriate, the Congress can choose not to fund them.

The best solution to the world's refugee crisis is to work with other nations so that they can assume an appropriate share of the international refugee burden. We need the cooperation of our international neighbors. If we decrease our own refugee by half, we send the wrong message to those nations.

I again want to thank Mr. SMITH for offering this amendment and urge my colleagues to support it.

TRIBUTE TO MARTIN BEGUN

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 1996

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to bring to the attention of my colleagues the outstanding achievements of a community leader who is truly dedicated to public service.

Martin S. Begun serves as senior associate dean of the New York University School of Medicine and vice president of external affairs of New York University Medical Center. Dean Begun serves as liaison to government officials on the city, State and Federal level. In addition, Marty oversees the public affairs and alumni relations offices of NYU Medical Center and School of Medicine.

In July of 1995, in tribute to his years of activism and leadership in the Jewish community, Marty also assumed the presidency of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. JCRC is a representative organization encompassing over 60 major civic, communal, educational and religious groups within New York City's diverse Jewish community.

As long as I have known Marty, he has been deeply involved in community service. He is a man who lives by the Talmudic maxim: "If I am not for myself, who will be? and if I'm only for myself, what am I?"

Marty has worked tirelessly to raise the standards of the NYU Medical School. That is a critical task which affects Americans nationwide. Three medical schools in New York, NYU Medical School included, train approximately 15 percent of all doctors who practice medicine in the United States. What is good for NYU Medical School is good for the American people.

Marty is always up-to-date on public policy. A long-time advocate for compassionate care for the homeless mentally ill, Marty often advises prominent public figures on the subjects of health care, public health, community relations and Jewish affairs. He was an excellent resource for me when health care reform was at the top of the national agenda in the 103d Congress. He advised me on the viability of the Clinton health plan, taking into consideration how it would impact not just the hospital and the medical school, but my constituents and New York City in general.

While he sees the big picture, Marty never loses sight of the details. Throughout his tenure at NYU, Marty has seen to it that expan-

sion of the NYU Medical Center complex has been carried out with great sensitivity to quality of life in the community.

Until 1994, Marty also served the city of New York for 18 years as chairman of the community services board of the city's department of mental health, mental retardation and alcoholism services. He continues to sit on the boards of the executive committee of the Associated Medical Schools of New York, and, by appointment of the Governor of New York State, on the Battery Park City Authority.

Mr. Speaker, for all of his good work; for his compassion; for his commitment to his community, his city and his country, Marty Begun has earned a reputation as mensch. I owe Marty a debt of gratitude for doing so much fine work in my district. And the city of New York owes him much, much more.

SUERJEE LEE WINS HIGH PRAISE FOR HELPING IMPROVE TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 1996

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a young Minnesotan, Ms. Suerjee Lee, for being recognized with the Prudential Spirit of Community Award. Ms. Lee is receiving the award for her volunteerism in the Twin Cities community, and is one of only two youths in my home State of Minnesota to be honored this year.

Her volunteer efforts span many segments of the community. She spends time with elderly residents of a nearby nursing home and serves as a mentor for special education students at her school. Ms. Lee is also involved in a project called Fresh Force, a volunteer organization which performs a variety of community service activities. One such activity included beautification of the Mississippi riverfront by removing trash from the area. Recently, she was selected to represent St. Paul's Battle Creek School Fresh Force Program at a regional meeting of Fresh Force program participants. It is for this hard work and her dedication to our community and its citizens that she is being honored.

In addition to her volunteer efforts, Ms. Lee, who is an eighth-grader at Battle Creek Middle School, still finds time to remain an excellent student and participate in student government.

Eight years ago she entered public school unable to speak English. Now, not only is she fluent in English, she is an "A" student and, therefore, a member of the National Honor Society. She also holds the position of vice president of Battle Creek Middle School's Student Council.

A selection committee will soon choose 10 individuals from the list of State winners of the Prudential Spirit of Community Award to be their national award winners. Regardless of that decision, the citizens of the Twin Cities community and Battle Creek Middle School have already received a higher honor and great benefit, Suerjee Lee's leadership and hard work on behalf of the future of our community. Her efforts not only serve to improve the lives of our citizens and improve the quality of life in the Twin Cities, she has demonstrated the importance of volunteerism and

community activism to all who know her. I join the entire community in congratulating Ms. Lee for winning this prestigious award and in thanking her for her efforts on behalf of our community and its citizens.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT T. ACKER

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 1996

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary service and dedication of a constituent in my district, Mr. Robert T. Acker of El Cajon, CA. Robert is a devoted member of this community serving the city of El Cajon for the past 30 years, 14 of these as city manager. He is soon retiring and I would like to take a moment to commend his dedicated service in local government and community programs.

A Holtville native, Robert is a graduate of San Diego State University [SDSU] with a master's degree in economics. After service in the U.S. Army, he went to work as an appraiser for the San Diego County Assessor's Office and in 1966, was hired as an administrative analyst for the city of El Cajon where he was promoted to city manager in 1982.

During his tenure as city manager, Robert has enthusiastically participated in dedications of public buildings including the El Cajon Fire Headquarters, the El Cajon Community Center, and the El Cajon Library. He is spirited and has always strongly advocated city improvements and prosperity.

Robert's involvement and accomplishments extend well beyond serving as the city manager of El Cajon. Aside from working as an assistant professor in public administration at SDSU, he also served as a member of the San Diego Transit Corporation Board of Directors, the City/County Managers Association, the Ducks Unlimited Steering Committee, the International City Management Association, the National Rifle Association, and the El Cajon Lions Club. This involvement in community service has assisted in raising funds for projects such as Canine Companions, El Cajon Boys and Girls Club, San Diego Service for the Blind, Home of Guiding Hands, Drug Awareness Resistance Education, Tijuana Orphanage Support, and Christmas Baskets for Needy Families.

Robert is a symbol of commitment and dedication to his fellow citizens and community. He has pledged a great share of his life to the service of others and he has surely made El Cajon a better place to live. Today, let us honor him for his unwavering contributions. I hope retirement can afford him the enjoyment of his hobbies hunting, fishing, gun collecting, and spending time with his wife and daughter, Susan and Kathryn. Mr. Robert Acker is well-deserving and I wish him great happiness in his future endeavors.

WHY WE NEED THE KASSEBAUM-KENNEDY GROUP-TO-INDIVIDUAL CONVERSION PROVISIONS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 1996

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, over the years, I've received many letters from around the Nation on the need for national health insurance reform.

Many of these writers would be helped by a provision in Kassebaum-Kennedy: the right to buy an individual policy after leaving a group policy, and not having one's pre-existing conditions excluded permanently. Many insurance companies oppose this provision but passing this law is the least we can do for our constituents.

The following letters make the case:

DEAR MR. CONGRESSMAN, I am a 50-year-old male who was recently laid off due to a corporate merger. I have continued Cobra health insurance program through my former employer, for myself and wife, at my own expense of \$281 per month.

I have accepted a position with a small company and applied for the medical insurance offered by them with John Alden Life Ins. Co. This has been in process for several weeks, and I have now received this enclosed letter refusing us coverage due to my "condition".

I have had a seizure disorder since my late teens which is totally controlled by medication and has not incapacitated me at any time. I am periodically checked by the doctor and lead a perfectly normal and active life.

This is the first time during 30 plus years in the work force with previous employers that I have ever been refused medical coverage. It imposes an extreme financial burden on us, and the ultimate horror is that we could be wiped out should there be any medical crisis which can happen to anyone at anytime.

What, Mr. Congressman, can be done about something like this, and where do we turn when suddenly judged uninsurable?

A MAN FROM CALIFORNIA.

MR. STARK: As a retired employee of Southeast Banking Corporation, my medical coverage ceased on September 20.

First, I believe it is outrageous that retired employees be advised after the fact that coverage was terminated, and not given the opportunity to seek alternative coverage in a timely manner.

Further, since Southeast was self insured and Metropolitan was merely the administrator, there is no policy to which we can convert.

Furthermore, I am advised by Metropolitan that due to a pre-existing condition (Parkinson's) of my wife, they have no coverage available for her and that they doubt if any insurer in the country would write coverage. And the Florida Insurance Commissioners Office claims that they have no jurisdiction over self-insured groups, plus enrollment in the State assigned risk program has been closed.

So, the long and the short of it is, we are out on the street. What am I to do?

DEAR CONGRESSMAN STARK, I am sure that you would be interested and concerned about what has recently happened to me as an older, retired adult, in relation to an extreme inequity in the health care system. What happened to me is as follows.

I retired as a result of a heart problem in 1989, and in 1990, I had a bypass surgery. I was covered by Kaiser Permanente Health Plan at the time, and I have been covered by them for the past 32 years. I was still carried by the engineering company from which I retired, but without my knowledge, my company discontinued the Kaiser health plan as of June, 1992. Not having been notified by either my ex-employer nor Kaiser, I continued to use the medical services, and even had an elective hernia operation in June. On June 26th, Kaiser sent a letter notifying me that I was no longer covered. Upon contacting them by phone, I was told of the circumstances, and was advised to apply under an individual membership. I complied and immediately applied, but I was rejected quickly by the Medical Review Board at Kaiser citing the reason as "arteriosclerotic heart disease".

MAN FROM CALIFORNIA.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK, I'm 13 years old and, a resident of San Leandro, California. When I was 10 months old my pulmonary artery had to be opened. At that time I had Health insurance. Unfortunately, after I recovered from the open heart surgery, my families insurance dropped my coverage. Due to the fact that my parents are self-employed, I have been without Health insurance for roughly 12 years.

Thank you for your time.

DEBORAH FROM HAYWARD, CALIF.

DEAR REP. STARK: My husband and I have been what we would call middle class for all our married life. We both held down good paying jobs and worked hard all our life. Two and one-half years ago I had three heart attacks in one month. I could no longer work for quite some time, having spent many weeks in the hospital. My husband has been treated for hypertension for some years, and it became obvious he must sell our business because of this and his worry over me, plus the fact that I could no longer work with him at our business. This was an unprofitable sale, business was poor and we had to share the proceeds with a partner in our business. He applied for and was paid Unemployment Comp. for several months until he obtained work. Since he returned to the workplace at age 59, it was very difficult to secure a well paying position, but he is a hard worker and he can provide for our needs at this time, except for health insurance coverage. I have returned to work part time only, as my health does not permit me full time employment. After paying into Unemployment for the eight (8) years we were in business, he has now been notified he was not eligible to collect unemployment at all, because the Unemployment Board decided he did not have good cause to sell the business and therefore, demand a repayment of \$3,000 he was paid. We are appealing this ruling, but I have gotten far afield of my subject I am afraid . . .

As we had group health coverage for both of us and our employees in our business, we have kept up that coverage until this month. We have been covered by Prudential Ins. for approximately 10 years. Each six (6) months the premium was raised 15 percent until this month it went to \$576 per month. We have been paying this premium each month from our savings (from the sale of the business and it was intended to be for our retirement). But now it has been depleted and we no longer can pay for the coverage. We have been unsuccessful in locating other coverage because of the two year wait for "pre-existing" conditions, I for my heart problems, he for hypertension. Also, not being in a "group" the cost was as much as we were paying Prudential for a group coverage.