

renewal process and make Romania's MFN status permanent.

Romania meets all the criteria for permanent MFN: unhindered emigration; a free market economic system; a multiparty democratic political system with free and fair elections, and respect for basic human rights and freedoms. As a nation still in transition after the 1989 revolution, Romania is still working to institutionalize these changes. But I have no doubt about the commitment of the Government and people of Romania to staying on the course of full integration into the Western community of nations. Romania is a founding member of the World Trade Organization, and has strongly expressed its desire for membership in such Western institutions as the EU and NATO. The granting of permanent MFN is regarded by foreign governments as a manifestation of U.S. support. It represents our acknowledgment that a nation has expressed strong commitment to the values that we hold dear. In a case such as Romania, it also signals our encouragement and support for the reforms that are still being made and the progress yet to come.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my colleagues will agree that Romania is deserving of this support and acknowledgment. Since granting permanent MFN to Romania will not affect the United States budget, this legislation is literally a cost-free way for us to express to the people and Government of Romania our admiration for what they have accomplished in 6 short years, our encouragement for their efforts to continue on the path they have chosen, and our hope for a better future for their children.

#### TRIBUTE TO STANLEY AND GWEN McCracken

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise before you today to pay tribute to two great Americans, Stanley and Gwen McCracken. In recognition of their exemplary service as the DAV and DAV Auxiliary State commanders of the great State of Michigan, their many friends and colleagues will join in honoring them during a Joint Testimonial Dinner to be held at DAV Chapter 129 Memorial Home, located in Utica, MI on Friday, April 26, 1996.

Commander McCracken is a veteran of both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force, serving both services with honor and distinction. He enlisted in the Army in 1958, serving as an infantryman. In 1963, Stanley decided to reenlist in the Air Force. He was assigned to the Strategic Air Command, Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico. His tour of duty included and encompassed many responsibilities, including being attached to the 42nd Bomber Wing, Combat Support Group. While at Ramey, he was assigned to a Recovery Team, as well as being an integral member of a ground crew, and finally assuming the duties of crew chief aboard a B-52 bomber.

Stanley McCracken earned the stripes of staff sergeant along with numerous decorations and awards for his outstanding military service before he was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1967.

Commander McCracken has been elected to, and successfully held every chapter level office, including chapter commander for two terms. He has also been an active member of the St. Clair County, MI, Allied Veterans Council for several years, in addition to being a member of DAV Chapter 51. Mr. McCracken accumulated extensive experience before assuming the State commander's job. He was an elected member of the State Administrative Board for 4 years before he was picked by the membership as a department line officer. He ultimately progressed his way through the various chairs, of the department, and was elected as State commander of the DAV in June 1995.

Equal in service to the DAV, Mrs. Gwen McCracken was elected to serve as commander of the Disabled Americans Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, in June 1995. Gwen McCracken has a long, outstanding record of service to her community. She has been a driving force in a number of organizations that are committed to improving the quality of life for those who are less fortunate. Mrs. McCracken was instrumental in helping to found Volunteers Assisting the Disabled, an organization that provides summer camp opportunities to adult MDA patients, who would otherwise, simply because of their age, be exempted from participating in camp.

Gwen McCracken is a life member of the Corporal Ian M. Gray Unit 51. She has been an extremely active member of the DAVA, eagerly accepting the duties and responsibilities of the many positions and offices of the organization that she has held including: state chaplain, senior page, first vice commander, and senior vice commander.

The McCrackens, through their collective energy, enthusiasm, and zeal, have stood like sentinels on behalf of not only disabled veterans, but on behalf of all veterans and their families. Their many years of combined service have helped to preserve and protect the promise that was made to care for those who have borne the battle, their widows, and their children.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I stand before you today asking that you and my fellow Members of the 104th Congress join me in honoring Stanley and Gwen McCracken. They have spent their lives in dedicated service to their country and community. I am pleased to have this opportunity to join with their family, friends, and colleagues to extend my deepest thanks for their tireless efforts on behalf of Michigan veterans.

#### TRIBUTE TO REV. CHARLES L. MOORE

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, the Reverend Charles L. Moore, at the age of 86, is the oldest active priest in the 19 county greater Cincinnati archdiocese. During his religious career, he has served as a parish priest, high school teacher, jail chaplain, mission administrator, church pastor, district moderator of the National Catholic Community Services, archdiocesan director of the Catholic Information Services, and military service counselor in World War II in Florida.

Father Moore has spent the last 16 years serving the parishioners at the Holy Family Parish in Middletown, OH, the students at Fenwick High School, and John XXIII Elementary School.

June 6, 1996 will be the 60th anniversary of Father Moore's ordination into the priesthood. I want to congratulate Father Moore on his years of service and dedication to helping the people of Southwestern Ohio.

#### A LEGACY OF LENIENCY

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton loves to talk up his record on crime, but the facts are the facts. The best antidrug legislation and the best law enforcement are useless if judges are not willing to uphold the law. When judges such as the ones the President has appointed show more sympathy for the people they prosecute, than for victims, the heroic efforts of the police and the law are muted.

The American people deserve the best qualified judges that reflect their priorities and values. It does not serve America well when a judicial nominee to one of the highest courts in the land does not possess even rudimentary knowledge of constitutional law—even if he is a golfing buddy of the President. If the President and Washington special interests get their way, we will get a judge trainee. This venerable position requires experience and extensive knowledge of the law. The nominee, Charles Stark possesses neither. He even testified before Congress that he could make up for his ignorance of landmark court decisions and constitutional law by taking some courses or asking other judges for help.

Mr. Speaker, this is no way to run a railroad. Most Americans will agree that we do not need a judge who needs on-the-job training. We need judges who will protect the rights of crime victims, not invent new, more expansive rights for criminals. We need judges who will follow through with the tough-on-crime measures my Republican colleagues and I have passed. But, perhaps more importantly, we need a President who will nominate such individuals.

#### JOSEPH S. FRANCIS: FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE TO SAN DIEGO

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Joseph S. Francis, executive secretary-treasurer of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, who will be honored with a Distinguished Service Award by the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council on April 27, 1996.

After four terms and 16 years of exemplary service, Joe Francis is stepping down from his leadership position with the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, whose affiliates number 103 local unions representing approximately 108,000 members. His strong leadership, vast experience, and organizing skills

have contributed much to the San Diego labor movement.

Raised in New Bedford, MA, Joe Francis moved to San Diego in 1953. Working first at Convair, he took a volunteer position as shop steward. Six years later, he joined the San Diego Fire Department, where he became involved in the local Firefighters Union. He was elected as director of the Union Board in 1965 and later served as secretary and then president of Local 145.

In 1980, after 21 years in the fire department, he was elected to the office of executive-treasurer of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council with two-thirds of the vote.

Noted for his calm but direct demeanor, Joe Francis reached out to the labor community during his term and brought attention to a broad list of concerns. The Labor Council made great strides under his leadership.

It is no wonder that the San Diego Business Journal called Joe Francis "San Diego's Top Labor Leader."

His involvement in countless community organizations is a testament to his dedication. He currently serves on the boards of United Way, the San Diego County Board of Economic Advisors, and the San Diego Technology Council. He previously served on the boards of the Salvation Army and the Regional Employment Training Consortium, among others, and was president of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation.

As he relinquishes his current post with the Labor Council, Joe Francis will retain his position as executive director of San Diego Labor's Community Service Agency.

Mr. Speaker, I join labor leaders in San Diego and across the country in congratulating Joe Francis for receiving the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council's Distinguished Service Award, and I wish him well in all future endeavors.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 735, ANTITERRORISM AND EFFECTIVE DEATH PENALTY ACT OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 18, 1996*

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to voice my strong opposition to the conference report for the Terrorism Prevention Act. I did not support the House bill as my voting record indicates and I did not intend to cast my support for the conference report. I strongly feel this legislation is a knee-jerk reaction to a most heinous crime. This body has passed enough legislation in previous years to catch and punish criminals who commit these atrocious acts against humanity. Unfortunately, I cannot change my vote but I do wish to make it clear that I opposed the conference report for the Terrorism Prevention Act.

#### EIGHTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 1996*

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues today to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide. In 1915, Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested and executed. The campaign of genocide began with this act and resulted in the deaths of over 1.5 million Armenians by 1923.

April 24 is the symbolic day of remembrance for the Armenian community to join together and remember the horrible events of their ancestors. Residents of Armenian heritage in my congressional district believe remembering the past will prevent the world from forgetting.

In addition, because some try to argue the Armenian genocide never occurred, calling attention to the tragedy is particularly worthwhile. Denial of genocide harms the victims and their survivors. That is one reason why I have joined a number of my colleagues in Congress in cosponsoring House Concurrent Resolution 47 to honor the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide.

I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering the tragedy of the Armenian genocide and in renewing our commitment to human rights. The Congress must stand firm in its resolve to oppose violence and repression against humanity.

#### HEALTH INSURANCE HELP FOR THOSE 55 AND OLDER

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 25, 1996*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing today legislation to make the COBRA health continuation program available to anyone between age 55 and the time they are eligible for Medicare.

Restructuring, layoff, downsizing, cutback, retrenchment—these words are heard too often in the 1990's. Amid corporate struggles to maintain profitability or simply to stay afloat, something else is shrinking: the number of permanent, full-time jobs.

As the level of employer-provided insurance declines and as hundreds of thousands of older workers face early retirement because of corporate downsizing, layoffs, and restructuring, the problem of health insurance for those not yet eligible for Medicare is becoming more and more serious.

While corporate profits were surging to record levels in 1994, the number of job cuts approached those seen at the height of the recession, according to a May, 1995 Wall Street Journal article. Profits rose 11 percent in 1994, on top of a 13-percent increase in 1993. Corporate America cut 516,069 jobs in 1994. International Business Machines Corp. [IBM] notified 1,200 employees last fall that they would no longer have jobs. Yet IBM's fourth-quarter profits were \$2.03 billion.

At AT&T, 40,000 jobs were recently cut. Workers will get a lump-sum payment based

on years of service, up to 1 year of paid health benefits and cash to cover tuition costs or to start a new business—but what happens to health coverage after the 1 year?

In Colorado, the Adolph Coors Co. announced plans in February to lay off as many as 150 of its 230 construction workers, despite profits of \$5.3 million in the fourth quarter.

Safety Stores undertook one of the most brutal corporate downsizing in history as a result of its leverage buyout in the mid 1980's. Safeway dumped 55,000 employees with no medical insurance, virtually no notice, and a maximum of 8 weeks severance.

A 1994 Nationwide study of 2,395 employers by A. Foster Higgins & Co., a New York based benefits consulting firm showed that among large companies—those with 500 or more employees—46 percent provide some form of coverage for early retirees, while only 39 percent provide insurance for Medicare-eligible retirees. Fewer than one in five large employers are willing to pay the entire cost of health care for their retirees, while 40 percent of the companies that do offer some form of health care coverage require the retiree to pay all of the costs. Those companies that do provide health care coverage for their retirees are increasingly requiring them to pay a share of the cost, especially for dependents.

Employee Benefit Research/Institute [EBRI] tabulations of the March 1995 Current Population Survey reveal that almost 14 percent of the near elderly, consisting of persons aged 55–64, was uninsured in 1994. As the baby boom generation approaches near elderly and elderly status, the issue of health insurance coverage for this group becomes increasingly important, particularly if the proportion of individuals aged 55–64 with employment-based coverage continues to decline.

Group health insurance is, of course, much less expensive than individual policy insurance, and that is why the COBRA benefit is so important and useful. The difference in cost can easily be several thousand dollars.

Help with the cost of this insurance is particularly important for those in their 50's and 60's because most insurance premiums rise sharply with age. For example, in the Los Angeles market, Blue Cross of California offers a basic, barebones in-hospital \$2000 deductible plan. This is a PPO plan where you are restricted to the hospitals you can use. For a couple under age 29, it costs \$64 a month. For a couple between age 60 and 64, it costs \$229 a month.

To help ensure that the cost of COBRA continuation is not a burden to business, my bill calls for age-55+ enrollees to pay 110 percent of the group rate policy—compared to 102 percent for most current COBRA eligible individuals and 150 percent for disabled COBRA enrollees.

I know that the cost of paying one's share of a group insurance policy will still be too much for many Americans and many of them will be forced into the uncertain mercies of State Medicaid policies. But for many others, this bill will provide an important bridge to age 65 when they will be eligible for Medicare. I wish we could do more—I'd like to see the gradual expansion of Medicare to all age groups, for example—but in the current climate, this bill is our best hope.

Over the years, I've received many letters from around the Nation on the need for national health insurance reform. Several of