

HONORING 30 YEARS OF BIG
BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS IN
PINELLAS COUNTY

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program in Pinellas County, FL. This Saturday, they will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of their service to the children of Pinellas County, which is located in my congressional district. Although I will not be able to participate in their celebration in person, I want to share my thoughts on this critically important program with my colleagues in Congress.

The Pinellas County Commission has proclaimed Saturday, September 27, as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County Day. I join them in recognizing one of the premier mentoring programs in the United States. The undisputable fact is that Big Brothers Big Sisters one-to-one mentoring program has a positive impact on children who participate in the program.

Children who are matched with big brothers or sisters are less likely to engage in destructive or antisocial behavior than those kids who are not. The "littles," as they are affectionately called by their bigger counterparts, are less likely to begin using illegal drugs and alcohol and more likely to attend school regularly than those children without the positive guiding influence of a big brother or sister. In fact, program participants are more confident at school and enriched relationships with their family members than those without a "big" influence.

Since 1967, approximately 15,000 children have participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Pinellas County. The agency has been at the forefront in developing exciting and innovative ways to improve the program's success. Its method for screening volunteers has been widely adopted by other children's service organizations.

Last year, Pinellas Big Brothers Big Sisters participated in the President's Summit on Volunteerism. Currently, there are 385 active matches in Pinellas County and there are 163 children waiting to be paired.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support Big Brothers Big Sisters program in their congressional districts. These dedicated volunteers help children become productive well-adjusted and caring members of the society. I commend Pinellas County Big Brothers Big Sisters for their leadership in helping children in my district and wish them continued success in the future.

IN HONOR OF THE BAYONNE
LIONS CLUB: CELEBRATING 50
YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Bayonne Lions Club, an exceptional organization serving the residents of my district, on their 50th anniversary. This

momentous occasion will be celebrated on September 24, 1997, with a cocktail reception at the Chandelier Restaurant in New Jersey.

The Bayonne Lions Club has worked for the Bayonne community since 1947 when they were granted a charter from the Lions Club international headquarters in Oak Brook, IL. This charter hangs on the wall of Amici's Restaurant where the club meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This year's anniversary celebration will not only raise funds for charity, but it will also provide the opportunity to highlight the club's achievements over the last half century.

Over the years, the Bayonne Lions Club has sponsored Christmas parties at the St. Joseph's Home in Jersey City, given braille typewriters as gifts to individuals, distributed food baskets, and provided medical care and vital eye surgery to those who needed it.

Among the esteemed members of the Bayonne Lions Club was the club's first president, Attorney Jack Feinberg of the law firm of Feinberg, Dee & Feinberg. One of Feinberg's successors, Dr. C.M. Jones, was the first African-American president of any Lions Club charter in the United States. One of the early active club members was businessman C.J. Murphy, who was the first representative of the Bayonne Lions to the Lions International zone and district. Club member, Walter Jones, has held every office in the Bayonne Lions Club and boasts the longest continuous Bayonne Lions Club membership. I would also like to thank Michael O'Connor, the current Bayonne Lions Club president for his hard work and dedication.

The members and officers, past and present, of the Bayonne Lion's Club richly deserve this honor and recognition for 50 years of unique contributions and caring dedication to their community. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the outstanding work and exceptional service of the Bayonne Lions Club. It is an honor to have such an outstanding organization working on behalf of the constituents of my district.

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM F. MILLER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor William Miller, who will receive an award this week for outstanding contributions to the Greater Cleveland community from International Services Center [ISC] in Cleveland, OH.

International Services Center is an agency that assists refugees, immigrants, and other newcomers to the United States to overcome social and economic barriers and adjust to a new culture and way of life. The organization is honoring four individuals this year for their exceptional work on intercultural and interracial issues. These individuals have been chosen because of their commitment to the community and their lifelong achievements which reflect the spirit and the mission of ISC.

Mr. Miller has been a columnist and reporter at Cleveland's Plain Dealer for 36 years. He covers nationality stories, general news, and international news as it impacts Cleveland. He writes an ethnic cultural column for the Friday!

Magazine and his column "New Worlds" appears each Saturday. He covered the fall of the Berlin Wall and witnessed the reunification of Germany. This experience proved helpful as he traveled to Central and Eastern Europe in 1990 to write a series of article called Life After the Wall. The series won the 1991 National Writing Award of the First Catholic Slovak Union of the United States and Canada and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Mr. Miller also won the Distinguished Service Award from the National Journalistic Society's Cleveland chapter.

Mr. Miller's writing was instrumental in saving the three Playhouse Square Theaters from being demolished to make room for a parking lot. His name appears with six others on a plaque commemorating his efforts to save the complex. The beautifully renovated buildings now comprise the third largest theater complex in America. Many other community organizations have also recognized Mr. Miller for his involvement. He has been honored by the Asian/Pacific Federation, the Federation of Italian Societies of Northeast Ohio, Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the United Labor Agency, and the Salvation Army.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating William Miller on a lifetime of wonderful work for the multicultural community in the Greater Cleveland area.

MEDICARE AND MEDICAID
PROVIDER REVIEW ACT OF 1997

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, together with Mr. DELLUMS and Mr. MILLER of California, I am pleased to introduce the Medicare and Medicaid Provider Review Act of 1997.

The HHS inspector general reports that an estimated 14 percent of Medicare payments overall, and 40 percent of home health payments, are made inappropriately each year. Much of this \$23 billion per year of fraud, waste and abuse occurs because providers do not comply with Medicare rules about medical necessity, and about how services and supplies should be coded and documented. In some cases, providers don't comply because they don't understand the rules. But in many other cases, providers understand the rules so well that they are able to flout them without being detected. The recent indictments of three Columbia/HCA executives for overbilling Medicare are a glaring example of provider's ability to game the system. In addition, the inspector general recently reported that 25 percent of home health agencies it investigated have "abused or defrauded Medicare or misappropriated Medicare funds."¹

Unfortunately, it's relatively easy for fraudulent operators to escape detection because the Health Care Financing Administration [HCFA], which oversees the Medicare and Medicaid programs, is woefully lacking in resources to provide adequate oversight and to track down abusers. Over the past 7 years, the number of Medicare claims processed rose 70 percent while HCFA's budget for reviewing claims grew less than 11 percent. Adjusting for claims growth and inflation, funding

¹Footnotes appear at end of speech.

for review dropped from 74 cents to 48 cents per claim. As a result, the proportion of claims reviewed dropped from 17 percent to 9 percent. In the especially problematic home health area, reviews plummeted from 62 percent in 1987 to a target of 3 percent in 1996.²

In many industries, it is standard operating procedure for businesses to fund independent audits of their compliance with Federal laws and regulations. For example, banks have paid for independent government financial and compliance audits since the 1800's. In fact, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency is a special branch of the Treasury Department that is fully funded through fees it assesses for conducting bank audits.

This legislation would require all hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, clinical laboratories, and ambulance companies to fund annual, federal financial and compliance audits as a Condition of Participation in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Other businesses they own in whole or in part would be included in the audits, which would ensure, for example, that providers are furnishing only services that are covered and medically necessary, that they are actually delivering the services for which they bill HCFA and that their cost reports are correct.

To ensure audit quality and consistency, specially trained Federal Medicare/Medicaid examiners, analogous to bank examiners in the banking industry, would conduct the audits. One home health agency owner convicted of Medicare fraud testified before Congress about the inadequacy of the few audits that the government currently conducts: "the auditors were not always sufficiently knowledgeable about Medicare reimbursement and areas of concern to be able to identify improper reimbursement practices * * * the audit teams seemed to change from year to year so there was no real continuity or consistency. The better the auditors understand a provider, the better they will be able to know where to look * * * the auditors need to look not just at the [core business of the provider], but at the overall structure."³

Audits would be paid for through hourly fees charged to providers. Thus, provider liability would depend on both the size of the provider and on how well they keep their books and records. A small agency that follows the rules and documents correctly would be charged very little. To further ease the burden on small businesses, the Secretary would have the authority to exempt providers from audits based on their volume of Medicare and Medicaid business.

To minimize the administrative burden on all health care providers, the bill would require the Secretary to conduct a study of all the examining and accrediting agencies and organizations that perform audits or inspections of the providers covered under this bill. Based on the study, the Secretary would make recommendations to Congress by June 1, 1999 on how to coordinate and consolidate these audits and inspections in order to reduce related costs to providers and government agencies.

Annual rather than initial one-time audits are needed because businesses may start out honestly, but gradually creep into abusing the system as they gain experience and test the waters. Annual audits would also serve an educational purpose, thus reducing waste that

occurs because providers don't understand the system.

Health care spending consumes an ever-increasing portion of the Federal budget—now at least 20 percent. And the Federal Government pays a third of our Nation's health care bills—more than any other single source.⁴ We are the largest purchaser—isn't it time we become a wiser purchaser? And isn't it imperative that we have tighter reins on an area that consumes so many of our tax dollars?

Banks have for many decades borne the financial responsibility for demonstrating their legitimacy. It is an accepted cost of the privilege of keeping other people's money. Medicare and Medicaid providers are being given the privilege of taking taxpayers' money, without the corresponding responsibility for proving their legitimacy. The appalling level of fraud, waste and abuse in the programs is the unfortunate result.

Banks are audited as a matter of public trust to ensure our Nation's economic security. Please join Mr. DELLUMS, Mr. MILLER and me in demanding provider audits to help ensure its health security.

FOOTNOTES***NOTE****TESTIMONY OF GEORGE F. GROB, DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EVALUATION AND INSPECTIONS, HHS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, BEFORE THE SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING, 7/28/97.***NOTE****TESTIMONY OF LESLIE G. ARONOVITZ, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, HEALTH FINANCING AND SYSTEMS ISSUES, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION, GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, BEFORE THE SENATE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE, 6/26/97.***NOTE****TESTIMONY OF JEANETTE G. GARRISON BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGING, 7/28/97.***NOTE****CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, WAYS AND MEANS HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE CHARTBOOK, 1997.

A TRIBUTE TO CAPT. L.D. "DEAK" CHILDRESS

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Capt. Louis "Deak" Childress, Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station Lemoore, in Lemoore, CA. Captain Childress has demonstrated exceptional leadership throughout his service in the U.S. Navy and is an asset to the community of Lemoore.

Captain Childress began his naval career by entering flight training at Aviation Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, FL, in July 1973. After completing training at Saufley Field and Whitley Field, he reported to Beeville, TX, in July 1974, and received his wings on December 20 of that year.

After graduation from flight school, Ensign Childress was assigned to Oceana, VA, flying the F-4 Phantom from the decks of the USS *Nimitz* and USS *Forrestal* from 1975 to 1978.

In October 1978, Lieutenant Childress served as an instructor pilot at NAS Miramar in San Diego and in November 1979, he was reassigned to the east coast F4-RAG in Virginia.

In July 1981, he reported to the staff of Commander Carrier Air Wing 17 as landing signals officer and safety officer, flying once again with the "Bedevilers." He completed the final east coast F-4 deployment in November

1982 and reported for temporary duty at Oceana while awaiting assignment in Lemoore, CA. While at Lemoore, he was the first tactical fighter pilot to instruct in Fighter Wing One's out-of-controlled-flight program, flying the T-2 and A-4 aircraft.

In July 1983, he was chosen to serve as part of the early cadre of instructor pilots in the developing F/A-18 program. He performed duties as senior LSO for the Hornet RAG, and was one of the first three instructors selected for the newly developed Strike Fighter Weapons School Pacific, and served as the RAG training officer.

In November 1985, Lieutenant Commander Childress reported as a plank owner, where he served as department head until August 1988. The squadron stood up in Lemoore, CA, and subsequently changed homeport to NAS Cecil Field in Jacksonville, FL.

In September 1988, Lieutenant Commander Childress reported to Commander U.S. Sixth Fleet in Gaeta, Italy for a tour as Flag Secretary. He served on board the Flagship, USS *Belknap*, until October 1990.

From November 1990 until June 1991, Commander Childress completed his PXO/CO training track and returned to NAS Cecil Field, FL. During that time, he was deployed to the Persian Gulf where he acted for nearly 4 months as senior naval representative to COMUSNAVCENT's contingency planning cell in Dharhan, Saudi Arabia.

In August 1993, Commander Childress, reported as Chief of Crisis Action Plans for the J-3 directorate of Headquarters United States European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. In March 1995, he was promoted to his current rank of captain, and in July 1996, Captain Childress reported as commanding officer, Naval Air Station Lemoore.

Since returning to Naval Air Station Lemoore, Captain Childress has dedicated himself to improving the lives of the sailors. The first phase of a new family housing project has been completed, with more units to be finished in the upcoming months. And, Captain Childress recently broke ground on a new state-of-the-art naval hospital.

Captain Childress is well-respected in both the U.S. Navy and in the city of Lemoore. The support he has given to the Public/Private Venture has played an important part in the economic growth and development of the city of Lemoore and Kings County.

Captain Childress is also a devoted family man. He and his wife, the former Mary Sue Duckworth, have two children, Brent (21) and Christopher (18).

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, please join me in wishing Captain Childress, devoted husband, father, community member, and dedicated serviceman, continued success.

IN SUPPORT OF COPS PROGRAMS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Three years ago, President Clinton vowed to place 100,000 more police officers on the streets of American cities in a nationwide effort to reduce crime starting at the community level. To fulfill this goal by the end of the year 2000, the Office of Community