

To further reach kids on a grassroots level, Nickelodeon will kick-off "The Big Help-on-the-Road," this Sunday in Washington. This mobile Big Help headquarters features video-based interactive kiosks, on-site volunteer activities, and information about local volunteer opportunities. "The Big Help-on-the-Road" will travel to local communities across the country—urban and rural, large and small—to champion the spirit of kid's voluntarism.

I hope you will join me in saluting Nickelodeon and its partner organizations in "The Big Help." These include: 4-H, American Camping Association, The American Humane Association, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the Caption Center, Earth Force, Easter Seals, Feed the Children, Girl Scouts of the USA, Girls Inc., Habitat for Humanity, Keep America Beautiful, National P.T.A., National Wildlife Federation, Points of Light Foundation, Ronald McDonald Charities, Safe America Foundation, Second Harvest, The U.S. Department of Education, Youth Service America, YMCA of the USA, and YWCA of the USA.

I'd like to commend Herb Scannell, president of Nickelodeon, for his corporate leadership and commitment to empowering kids to make a difference. I would also like to commend Marva Smalls, senior vice president at Nickelodeon, and a constituent of mine, for organizing "The Big Help" program.

Finally, I would like to salute the millions of kids across the country who are volunteering their time and efforts to make their world a better place. They should serve as an example to all of us.

OHIO CITIZENS AGAINST LAWSUIT ABUSE

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a group of Ohioans who have come together to speak out on the issue of lawsuit abuse. Because of their ongoing concern, local citizens have volunteered their time to organize Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse [OCALA] and to undertake a public awareness campaign about what they perceive as the problems of lawsuit abuse.

Based in Columbus, Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse focuses their efforts in informing and educating Ohio residents about an issue that has statewide and national implications for all Americans. The costs of lawsuit abuse can include higher costs for consumer products and services, higher medical expenses, greater taxes, and fewer jobs due to lost business expansion and foregone product development. This is not a new concern for many of us in the House of Representatives, but one which must be addressed.

OCALA wants to help prevent unnecessary lawsuits that do more harm than good and bring balance, fairness, responsibility, and restraint to our court system. OCALA supporters believe that through education, there will be change in public understanding, attitudes, and behavior, and they have the opportunity to play a vital role in reforming the legal system.

This nonprofit grassroots organization has raised local funds to run educational media

announcements and provide speakers for other organizations and citizens' groups across the State. They hope these actions will raise awareness of the lawsuit abuse issue and help legislators arrive at fair and equitable legislative solutions.

Gov. George Voinovich has declared September 22–27 as Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week throughout the State of Ohio. I want to commend all the individuals who are involved in Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse for their dedication and commitment. They are helping elected Federal and State officials address serious issues. I commend their work on behalf of our State.

TRIBUTE TO VIRGIL MURPHY

HON. JAY W. JOHNSON

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Virgil Murphy, an honored leader and public servant from Bowler, WI.

Virgil is currently the president of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians in northeast Wisconsin and he is retiring at the age of 77, after a lifetime of service and achievement. He is a stalwart fixture in the community, having held the positions of vice president, tribal treasurer, tribal council member, housing director, and chairman of the Mohican Elderly Steering Committee.

Even in retirement, Virgil will continue to be an honored elder and his advice and leadership will be relied upon for the tribe's future endeavors.

His concern for the tribe's economic well-being and unity is well-known. His devotion for his family is plain to all who know him. His service to his tribe and to his country as a U.S. Army veteran will always be remembered.

Please join me in thanking Virgil Murphy for his years and years of dedication and wishing him the best in the future.

U.S. ARMY RESEARCH LABORATORY ANNOUNCES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMIC RECOGNITION SYSTEM [STARS] FELLOWS

HON. WILLIAM (BILL) CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, recently, Dr. John Lyons, Director, U.S. Army Research Laboratory [ARL] announced the first recipients of ARL's Science and Technology Academic Recognition System [STARS] fellowships for students enrolled in historically black colleges and universities and other minority institutions. I am pleased to congratulate this year's recipients: LaDonna Nettles from Gautier, MS, Makeda Smith from Birmingham, AL, and Theodore Anthony from Baltimore, MD. Both Ms. Nettles and Ms. Smith are students at Xavier University and Mr. Anthony is a student at Morgan State University.

The STARS initiative is designed to increase the number of minority scientists and

engineers as we enter the millennium. It provides tuition and expenses for the senior undergraduate year and 2 years of graduate school. STARS awards can total \$100,000 each of the 3 years. Information about the program may be obtained by writing: Betty Irby, Senior Analyst of ARL, U.S. Army Research Laboratory, 2800 Power Mill Road, Adelphi, MD 20783, ATTN: AMSRL-SP. I encourage all interested parties to learn more about this valuable program.

THE CREDIT UNION AUDIT IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation, the Credit Union Audit Improvement Act of 1997, I am introducing with my colleague, Mr. BACHUS of Alabama. As Members of this body know, our Nation's insured credit unions are a vital part of our financial services system. Therefore, the accuracy of their financial records is of utmost importance. It is important to the people trusting their money with these institutions, to the regulators doing their job and to the taxpayers who actually ensure these institutions.

It is with this in mind that I introduce the Credit Union Audit Improvement Act. My legislation would do several things. It would amend the Federal Credit Union Act [the act] to require each federally insured Federal and State credit union to: prepare financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles [GAAP] and to have an independent audit performed by an independent licensed accountant in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards [GAAS]; prepare an annual written assertion about the effectiveness of the credit union's internal controls over financial reporting; obtain a written report—or attestation report—from an independent licensed accountant regarding management's report on internal controls; and prepare an annual written assertion about the credit union's compliance with specified laws and regulations.

Under the legislation, the National Credit Union Administration [NCUA] would be able to exempt smaller credit unions with less than \$10 million in assets. The bill would also specifically require credit unions to engage only those external persons who meet applicable state licensing requirements to perform services subject to these requirements.

This legislation is in response to a final ruling by the NCUA on financial audits of credit unions. The final rule, effective December 31, 1996, allows compensated, nonlicensed persons to audit a credit union's financial information and internal controls. This is in direct contravention to most State accountancy statutes, which require auditors to be licensed. Several State boards of accountancy, including the one in my home State of Florida, have written in protest of this rule. Florida State law states that only certified public accountants can attest as an expert in accountancy to the reliability or fairness of presentation of financial information. The NCUA, in response to several States' inquiries, has made clear its intention to preempt these State laws, support a credit

union's right to hire anyone it deems qualified to perform the audit. This seems odd—after all, who is going to be a better judge of who is qualified? A credit union supervisory board made up of volunteers who may or may not have any background in financial statements or the State accountancy boards?

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I was a bit surprised to learn that the act lacks clear objectives and standards for audits and external auditors. The safety and soundness of untold numbers of credit unions—and therefore their insurance—could be jeopardized if credit union management and regulators do not have a reliable financial picture. Section 115 of the act says only that each Federal credit union's supervisory committee shall make or cause to be made an annual audit. NCUA rules require—in substance, though not in form—an audit of financial statements. But what does not make sense is that the audit does not have to be based on professional auditing standards followed by independent professional auditors.

This makes no sense. I believe that such an audit should be performed only by independent licensed professional public accountants as virtually every State accountancy statute requires. Audits are important to ensure that financial data used by a credit union's members and by Federal and State regulators are reliable as well as to identify potential control weaknesses. But the audit loses its effectiveness when not performed according to the rigors of professional standards by persons who have had to demonstrate their competence and independence in auditing.

Allowing nonlicensed individuals to perform audits poses a direct threat to the public interest by legitimizing work that is inadequate, lacks uniformity, and is void of definitive standards.

Mr. Speaker, I am not alone in believing this. When talking to credit union managers, I was told that many credit unions already have audits performed by licensed professionals. When asked why, the purpose was clear: fiduciary reasons. The supervisory committees have an obligation to their depositors to ensure that the credit union is properly audited since an audit can pick up things that even the most thorough NCUA examination would not. But credit union managers are not alone in their thoughts. The GAO also recommended that credit unions above a minimum size should be required to obtain annual independent certified public accountant audits and to make annual management reports in internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations in a 1991 report. In 1993, the NCUA itself proposed requiring credit unions with more than \$50 million in assets to obtain annual independent audits of their financial statements. The NCUA not only cited the 1991 GAO report, but it also said that the requirement was necessary due to the increasing complexity of credit unions' financial statements. This proposal was modified into today's form due to pressure from the industry.

In response to my request for comment on this bill, the NCUA gave several reasons, none satisfactory in my opinion, why unlicensed people should be allowed to perform audits outside of GAAP standards. Among them, it was pointed out that the NCUA would like to preserve the occasional GAAP/RAP differences. RAP standards proved ineffective long ago, most notably in the savings and loan failures. Elimination of RAP standards alone may be a good enough argument for this bill.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that we cannot allow nonlicensed persons to do external auditing at insured credit unions. After all, what's the point if they do not provide the reliability that one performed by a licensed individual? There is no good reason why we should not ensure that credit union audits are as reliable as possible. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

RECOGNIZING IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY AMERICANS OF AUSTRIAN HERITAGE

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] for introducing this resolution which pays fitting tribute to our many outstanding citizens who take pride in their Austrian heritage. In order to highlight the very close ties between Austria and this country, Austrian President Dr. Thomas Klestil has taken an initiative through the Austrian-American community to observe Austrian-American Day on September 26, 1997. This is an initiative which I believe we can all support.

This resolution reminds us that we should be thankful for the many contributions made to this country by such great Americans as Joseph Pulitzer, Felix Frankfurter, Arthur Burns, Billy Wilder, and Arnold Schwarzenegger all of whom are of Austrian descent. I should add to this list our distinguished colleague DOUG BEREUTER whose forebears also hailed from Austria.

I urge my colleagues, by way of acknowledging their contributions to America, and offering our thanks and congratulations to our friends and fellow citizens of Austrian heritage, to adopt this measure.

THE PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH STAMP ACT

HON. SHERROD BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to introduce the Prostate Cancer Research Stamp Act. This legislation would authorize a special first class stamp to be priced at up to 8 cents above the cost of normal first-class postage. The additional money from this voluntary purchase would be earmarked for prostate cancer research.

Earlier this year, 422 Members of the House voted for similar legislation to increase funding for breast cancer research by allowing Americans to voluntarily purchase specially issued U.S. postal stamps. My legislation would extend this effort to help the hundreds of thousands of men who suffer from prostate cancer.

More than 334,000 American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1997, making it the most commonly diagnosed form of cancer in the United States. More than 41,000 men will die from the disease this year. De-

spite these staggering statistics, prostate cancer has received a fraction of the resources dedicated to other forms of cancer. The Prostate Cancer Research Stamp Act would support research into the prevention, detection, and early diagnosis of this deadly disease. I hope you will join me in this effort.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK HOLMGREN

HON. MICHAEL PAPPAS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, fifty-five years ago, we were engaged in a terrible conflict that cost over 250,000 American lives. The service and dedication of our Nation's World War II service men and women laid the cornerstones to the greatness our Nation experiences today.

Today, I would like to call attention to one of the heroic Americans who fought in this war. On Friday, September 26, 1997, the Eatontown Elks Lodge No. 2402 will be holding a testimonial dinner honoring Frank Holmgren at Gibbs Hall at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Mr. Holmgren, retired from the U.S. Navy, is one of two surviving crew members of the U.S.S. *Juneau*, a light cruiser that played an integral part in the war.

The U.S.S. *Juneau* was commissioned on February 14, 1942, under the command of Capt. Lyman K. Swanson. After a valiant effort at the Battle of Santa Cruz, the ship and Mr. Holmgren were then sent to protect transports and cargo vessels at Guadalcanal. After being struck by a torpedo to the port side by enemy aircraft, the U.S.S. *Juneau* and her crew continued to fight enemy planes and Japanese ships at close range. At 1100 hours, November 13, 1942, three torpedoes were fired from a Japanese submarine toward the U.S.S. *Juneau*. She managed to avoid the first two, but the third struck the hull in the same place the first one from the plane did. The U.S.S. *Juneau*, in a terrible explosion, broke in two and sank within 20 seconds. Of 700 heroic crew members, only 10 survived, and 1 of those was Frank Holmgren. I stand here today to honor Frank Holmgren, as well as those who did not escape the U.S.S. *Juneau*, for their unselfish, dauntless courage under fire, for which we are forever grateful.

Mr. Speaker, it is sailors of the U.S.S. *Juneau* and specifically men like Mr. Holmgren that epitomize the endurance and perseverance of the American people. We must never forget the valiant efforts of our wartime veterans and those who have made the supreme sacrifice. Our Nation owes these veterans the greatest degree of gratitude. It is my great privilege to acknowledge Mr. Holmgren and the great service he has made to our country.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 77TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DELAWARE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the fine work of an outstanding,