

A TRIBUTE TO HAMPTON BAYS
VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER JOHN
C. WOURGOLA

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this venerable Chamber to ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in paying tribute to John C. Wourgola, who has devoted 50 years of his life to protecting the lives and property of his family, friends, and neighbors as a volunteer firemen in Hampton Bays, Long Island.

This Saturday, October 4, 1997, John Wourgola will be honored by the commissioners, chiefs, officers, and firefighters of the Hampton Bays Fire Department for his half-century of exemplary service. Since 1946, whenever fire or other peril threatened a member of the Hampton Bays community, John was there to answer the call, whether it came in the dead of night, on blustery days or in the stifling heat of summer. Concerned only with assisting a neighbor or stranger in need, John learned to confront the grave danger he and the other firefighters faced with a caution respect, confident he could trust in this training, his skill, and the abilities of his fellow firefighters.

While the Hampton Bays Fire Department has been truly blessed with many dedicated volunteers, John Wourgola has demonstrated an exceptional level of commitment to his community. In his 50 years as a Hampton Bays firefighter, John has earned the trust and respect of his peers, who have chosen him for numerous leadership positions, including lieutenant and captain. John Wourgola remains an active and vital member of the Hampton Bays Fire Department, answering the call to duty with the same dedication and focus that he brought to volunteer service 50 years ago.

Demonstrating that true heroes are created over a lifetime of selfless acts and service to their God, family, and country, John Wourgola is the perfect model for every volunteer firefighter who will come after him. So I ask my colleagues in this esteemed House to join me in congratulating John for 50 years of service to the Hampton Bays Fire Department.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JIM
PARDINI

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jim Pardini for being selected 1997 Fresno County Harvest of Hope Humanitarian of the Year by the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Mr. Pardini exemplifies genuine dedication and service to the community of Fresno, CA.

Jim Pardini is a second generation restaurateur who has worked and managed his family business since 1968. After considerable success in the seventies, Pardini established a catering division in 1981. Pardini Catering soon became one of the largest off-premise catering firms in California. To diver-

sify his services, Pardini opened Pardini's Grill, Lounge and Banquet Room in 1994. This move positioned the Pardini franchise as the premier food service company in California's San Joaquin Valley, capable of accommodating everything from business lunches to weddings.

Currently, Jim Pardini is president and CEO of Pardini's Inc., parent company of all Pardini food service operations. He is also the owner of several Tony Roma restaurants throughout California.

Pardini's accomplishments are not limited to business ventures as he is sincerely committed to the well-being of Fresno, CA. Specifically, Jim Pardini is on the board of directors for Fresno's City and County Convention and Visitors Bureau. This organization advertises the benefits of the city to conferences and tourists. Similarly, Pardini is a board of director for the Saint Agnes Medical Center Foundation. This foundation secures funding for one of the Nation's top 100 hospitals. Finally, he is the former president of the California Restaurant Association, the former president of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce and is a supporter of Fresno's Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I congratulate Jim Pardini, the 1997 Fresno County Harvest of Hope Humanitarian Award recipient. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Jim Pardini every success on his future endeavors.

THE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID
PROVIDER REVIEW ACT OF 1997:
IT'S ABOUT TIME

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the hot new job in health care: compliance. I refer my colleagues to a September 18 Wall Street Journal article which describes how hospitals and other providers are hiring and promoting professionals to ensure their compliance with laws and regulations. It's about time; \$23 billion per year in Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse reported by the HHS inspector general is proof positive that we need to take compliance more seriously.

Together with Mr. DELLUMS and Mr. MILLER of California, I have introduced legislation that would require certain health care providers to fund independent, Federal compliance and financial audits as a condition of participation in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. If providers are willing to foot the bill to fly-in compliance consultants from high profile firms like Coopers & Lybrand, they can surely afford Government audits. The last thing we need is for providers to only retain private sector professionals who can show them how to be sneakier. We've already given the health care industry the benefit of the doubt far too long.

The administration also recognizes that audits are needed to ensure financial and regulatory compliance. Health and Human Services [HHS] Secretary Donna Shalala recently announced that home health agencies will have to submit an independent audit of their records and practices every 3 years to receive Medicare funds. In addition, HHS will double

the number of home health agency audits it conducts from 900 to 1,800 per year.

While home health agencies may be the system's most blatant abusers, they are by no means the only ones worthy of our best efforts to fight fraud. My bill would require audits of hospitals, nursing facilities, hospices, clinical laboratories, and ambulance companies in addition to home health agencies. Yet HHS doesn't have the funding to audit all categories of providers that have abusive track records. Even if it did, taxpayers shouldn't have to foot the bill. The sum of \$23 billion says it's time to make Federal audits a cost of doing business with the Nation's largest health care payer, the Federal Government.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 18, 1997]

HOT NEW JOB IN HEALTH CARE: IN-HOUSE COP
(By George Anders)

The hottest new job category in health care doesn't require a medical license or a nursing degree. It's compliance officer, a job borrowed from the defense industry and other businesses under fire from regulators.

Now hospitals and medical schools across the country are rushing to hire their own in-house cops, hoping they'll keep them from running afoul of the government's widening crackdown on health-care fraud—or help minimize penalties when infractions are found.

Consultants estimate that only 5% of the nation's 5,400 hospitals and medical schools have comprehensive compliance departments now. But they suggest the total could double in the next year.

Securities firms in the late 1980s shored up their compliance departments in hopes of averting insider-trading scandals. Defense contractors, thrift institutions and companies worried about pollution regulations have all taken similar steps in the face of greater government scrutiny.

The health-care compliance movement got a boost Monday when President Clinton announced wide-ranging initiatives to combat fraud in home health care. Many hospitals operate home-health units that have been financially lucrative.

Before the President's speech, hospitals had already been galvanized by the government's massive investigation of Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corp. This year, in which federal agents with search warrants have swooped into dozens of Columbia-owned hospitals. People familiar with the investigation say the government is looking into a wide range of potential billing abuses. Columbia has said it isn't aware of any systemic wrongdoing.

"I've gotten a lot more respect since the Columbia situation hit the media," says Elizabeth Ryan, a compliance consultant who until recently was head of compliance at Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, Texas. "A year or two ago, when I called on people within the hospital, they said: 'What's this all about?' But once they've seen pictures of FBI agents carting away boxes of documents at Columbia, their attitude is: 'Fine. No problem. Come talk to us about whatever you want.'"

In Nashville, Tenn., Columbia itself wants to expand its roster of top executives to include a senior vice president, compliance. Until recently, a mid-level aide to the general counsel was in charge of Columbia's compliance program.

But as Columbia spokesman Jeff Prescott puts it: "Compliance issues are, and will continue to be, very important for our company." The best way to underscore that message to employees, he says, is to make compliance a much more prominent part of Columbia's management structure.

It's unclear how much whistle-blowing the hospital industry really wants from its compliance chiefs. After all, ultra-strict compliance programs can mean higher costs and irritating bureaucracy. Some plump revenue sources could wither away, too, if compliance officers declare them to be off-limits.

But most federal fraud-fighters welcome the effort. "What we're talking about is ensuring that organizations bill appropriately, that they train their staff appropriately, and that they follow good business practices," says Eileen Boyd, deputy inspector general at the Department of Health and Human Services.

When problems do exist, federal sentencing guidelines treat the existence of a compliance program as a mitigating factor that can reduce civil or criminal penalties. Conversely, hospitals without a compliance program may be told to form one as part of settling a federal fraud investigation. For that reason, Ms. Boyd tells the industry: "You can pay for compliance now, or you can pay for it later."

Traditionally, hospitals have counted on low-level internal auditors to catch problems, and report them to senior management. But the new, high-profile compliance chiefs are expected to get involved in potential trouble spots much earlier. They are also expected to flag hospital boards and the government right away if infractions are found.

Paul Flanagan got into compliance work 2½ years ago, after finishing his studies at Creighton Law School in Omaha, Neb. When he asked a local attorney for career tips in health care, the answer amounted to a single word: "Compliance."

He soon became chief compliance officer at Alegent Health in Omaha. Six weeks ago, the 31-year-old Mr. Flanagan jumped to a fast-track job at Coopers & Lybrand, where he will travel around the country, helping as many as 60 hospitals set up compliance departments.

Currently, the HHS inspector general's office and the American Hospital Association are drafting guidelines for a model compliance program for hospitals. Those standards are expected to be issued this fall. They are likely to be welcomed by a hospital industry fearful that the government's anti-fraud campaign could sweep up not just outright rascals but also people who have been trying to obey laws that they don't understand very well.

"The regulations are so complex that organizations can make errors just because of the complexity," says Sister Pat Eck, chairperson of the Bon Secours Health System Inc. chain of Hospitals and nursing homes in Marriottsville, Md.

Sister Pat says that Bon Secours has traditionally relied on its internal audit department to catch problems, adding that she is "comfortable" with its work to date. But she says her board is encouraging her to consider creating a more formal compliance department, something that could happen as soon as next year.

While the most dramatic part of compliance programs may be the detection of wrongdoing, their most important function may be training employees how to follow the rules in the first place, says Ms. Boyd, the deputy inspector general at HHS.

"I'm a big believer in hands-on training, where people have a chance to ask questions and get tested on what they were supposed to learn," she says. "Putting a manual on a shelf—or herding people into an auditorium to watch a video—doesn't do it for me. If the health-care industry is foolish enough to put in compliance programs that aren't viable, they're making a serious mistake."

TRIBUTE TO DR. JASON HU, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Jason Chih-chiang Hu, the distinguished representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States. As my colleagues know, Ambassador Hu has served as the chief representative of the Republic of China on Taiwan here in the United States for the past 15 months.

During that time, the friendship between our two countries has benefitted greatly from Jason Hu's outstanding efforts. Although Jason will be leaving Washington, DC, we are fortunate that he will continue to work for better relations between the United States and Taiwan. He will return to Taipei within the next few weeks to assume the critically important position of foreign minister.

Dr. Jason Hu's record of distinguished public service to his nation spans more than a decade. He received his B.L. in diplomacy from the National Chengchi University in Taiwan, and his Ph.D. in International Studies at Oxford University. Jason began his career as a university professor, and he later served as the government's chief spokesman. Since June of 1996 he has been the chief representative to the United States.

We will miss Jason's wisdom and his articulate and informed advocacy for Taiwan. Jason's lovely and charming wife, Shirley, will also be missed. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity for Jason and Shirley to serve their country in a new and challenging position.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing them bon voyage and great success as they face the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES JOHNSON

HON. EARL F. HILLIARD

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. James Johnson of Birmingham, AL. Mr. Johnson recently passed away, yet his legacy will remain a shining example to our community for decades to come.

Mr. Johnson was born in Sumpter County, AL, and was educated in the public school system of Alabama. He was a hardworking man who spent decades working in the steel mills of Ensley, AL.

Above all, Mr. Johnson was a brave and courageous man. He was the first black ever elected as a constable, and he served over 20 years.

While James Johnson was confronted with the evils of segregation and legalized Jim Crow laws over 50 years ago, he did something about it. Mr. Johnson stood up and was counted by volunteering to help register black voters throughout Alabama during a period of history when he knew, good and well, that his

actions might cost him his life. However, Mr. Johnson was more concerned about righting a wrong and correcting an injustice, than about his personal safety.

I will personally miss Mr. Johnson. He was a great and noble man. My sincere condolences go to his wonderful wife, Mrs. Bernice C. Johnson of Birmingham and all of his children, family, and friends.

ST. MICHAEL'S POST 1562, CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS, CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JAMES H. MALONEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Nation a most important event in my Connecticut district. This weekend, St. Michael's Post 1562 of the Catholic War Veterans, will celebrate its 50th anniversary. The event will be marked with the celebration of a mass and a dinner that evening in Derby, CT.

Post 1562 was officially chartered on December 22, 1947. With 345 members, the post is the largest Catholic war veterans group in the State of Connecticut and the fourth largest in the Nation. In addition to advancing the interests of Catholic war veterans who have courageously served their country, this organization's efforts have served to improve the lives of all residents of the Derby area.

For many years, members of Post 1562 have volunteered their time to patients at the Veterans Administration Hospital in West Haven, CT. Also, the post and its ladies auxiliary combine efforts on a yearly basis to participate in the traditional Cross of Peace Drive at local churches. Furthermore, the post distributes gifts to needy boys and girls at their annual children's Christmas party.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely heartening to find an organization that makes a critical difference in the lives of so many people. St. Michael's Post 1562 of the Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A. truly is a model institution. On behalf of the State of Connecticut and our entire Nation, I want to commend the officers and members of Post 1562 for not just their sacrifices to our country in the name of freedom, but also for their invaluable efforts to strengthen the communities of the Derby area.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JIMMIE D. HOLMANS

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedication, public service, and patriotism of Col. Jimmie D. Holmans. Colonel Holmans, a native Texan, will retire from the U.S. Air Force on October 1, 1997 after more than 29 years of faithful service to our Nation.

Since the beginning of his military career in November 1967, Colonel Holmans has risen through the ranks of the U.S. Air Force, always ready and willing to serve our country in