

the rolls of social security, disability, welfare, and Medicaid.

Arachnoiditis sufferers want to become functioning, contributing members of society again. The Traficant legislation will provide research for treatments for arachnoiditis sufferers, including treatments to manage pain. Pain-management treatments would enable sufferers to once again become active, working members of society.

It's time to protect unsuspecting Americans from this debilitating and preventable condition. I ask Members of Congress to join me by cosponsoring my legislation.

SALUTE TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me this February in celebrating Black History Month. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the courageous leadership and civic duty that has shaped the communities of New York throughout this decade. As we approach a new century, New Yorkers of all ethnic backgrounds will face a new set of economic, social, and political challenges. If we stop and recognize the perseverance of African-Americans in times of change, their record of commitment to the pursuit of prosperity, integrity and opportunity for their families and friends speaks for itself.

The tireless work of community and religious leaders in guiding African-American communities have done much to improve the quality of life in our city. I am proud to honor this important occasion where African-Americans join hands to acknowledge their accomplishments and their unique contributions to our society and the world.

The level of civic participation in today's culture is depressingly low among average American citizens. However, I am always inspired by the surge of community spirit and leadership from African-Americans in New York. Our society would be a better place if more Americans emulated the civic duty and moral strength of their African-American counterparts. I hope that Black History Month is recognized and honored by citizens of all backgrounds. I honor the work and vision of my African-American colleagues in Congress and throughout New York. May our city continue to be blessed with their leadership.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, on February 5, 1997, I was not present for rollcall votes No. 9 and No. 10 due to the birth of my daughter Sarah Kathryn Roemer.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" for rollcall vote No. 9 and I would have voted "yea" for rollcall vote No. 10.

25 YEARS OF GLORY

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a person special to Livonia, MI: Father George Shalhoub.

For the last 25 years, Fr. George has been a spiritual leader, church builder, educator, loyal husband, and father. He was the driving force that built St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, making the church what it is today.

Born in Lebanon, George Shalhoub immigrated to America and in 1972 he married his wife, Nouhad, was ordained as a priest, and assigned to the newly established St. Mary Orthodox Church within 2 weeks.

After the birth of their first child the following year, St. Mary's broke ground for the new church and fellowship building. In March 1976, the congregation, led by Fr. Shalhoub, celebrated its first divine liturgy in their own church.

After years of building, growth, and progress, tragedy struck in April 1996, testing the strength of the Fr. Shalhoub and the entire St. Mary's family. Their church was destroyed by fire.

But just 6 months later, thanks to the hard work, leadership, and dedication of Fr. Shalhoub, St. Mary's was resurrected from the flames like the phoenix.

This week George, Nina, their four children, and the entire St. Mary's congregation celebrate 25 years of strength, dedication, commitment, and faith. I extend my heartiest congratulations on their special anniversary.

LET'S SHOW THE PUBLIC WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT REDUCING THE SIZE OF FEDERAL SPENDING: REFORM OUR CONGRESSIONAL PENSION SYSTEM

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill to reform the pension system for Members of Congress and their staff. My bill, the Congressional Pension Reform Act, will make the pension benefits for Members of Congress the same as other Federal employees.

The Congressional Pension Reform Act of 1997 reduces the pension accrual rates for Members of Congress and their staff members. A pension accrual rate is the percentage of pre-retirement pay earned in pension benefits for each year of service. Under my bill, those congressional Members and staff who entered Federal service before 1984 will have their accrual rates reduced from 2.5 percent to between 1.5 and 2 percent, depending on how long a person has worked for the Federal Government. For Members and staff who began Federal service after 1984, their accrual rates are reduced from 1.7 percent to 1 or 1.1 percent. These changes will save the taxpayers about \$9 million over 6 years.

As a member of the House Budget Committee, I realize that we as legislators have to make tough decisions which limit the size of

our Federal Government. We need to shift responsibilities from a bloated Federal bureaucracy to families and local communities. I want to demonstrate to the people of Lancaster and Chester Counties that I will impose sacrifices upon myself and the rest of Congress which are similar to those we ask others to make.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Members of Congress should be treated like every other Federal employee. By reforming our own pension plan, we can reduce the perks of elected office which have no place in our Federal Government and which shake the public's confidence.

On January 30, I wrote to Budget Chairman JOHN KASICH to urge that my provisions on congressional pension reform be included in the majority's balanced budget package. Further, I plan to have my bill included in the budget reconciliation bill so that our shared goals of reducing Government spending and reviving the public's trust in this body can become a reality. I thank the Speaker, and look forward to working with him to reform our pension system.

THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, February 12, 1997, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Declaring that we have no imminent threat and that the enemy of our time is inaction, President Clinton issued a call to action in his State of the Union address. It was a call to keep our economy and our democracy strong, to strengthen education and harness technology, to build stronger families and communities, and to keep America the world's strongest force for peace, freedom, and prosperity. The President used more of the "bully pulpit" in the speech, often using rhetoric and challenges to the American people rather than urging new federal programs.

In many ways, the address distilled the President's thinking about what is needed to prepare the American people for the 21st century. He said we need to "take the tough decisions in the next four years that will carry our country through the next fifty years".

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The President sought to define himself, his agenda, and his presidency for the American people, and he certainly summed up his view of government. He said we must be committed to "a new kind of government—not to solve all our problems for us, but to give all our people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives".

The President clearly focused on small, incremental proposals rather than the sweeping federal initiatives he proposed when he first took office, such as health care reform. Even when the President promises to focus time, energy, and money on an issue—like education—he proposes something less than an all-out federal assault. Overall, he brought together many proposals from his recent speeches in an effort to frame a program that seems significant but would cost relatively little.

DOMESTIC PRIORITIES

His discussion of his domestic priorities was by far the most detailed portion of his

speech. Often he spoke about problems that the nation's governors have been talking about, such as education and crime.

The President spoke crisply, and with conviction. He showed genuine passion as he talked about his number one priority for the next four years—ensuring that Americans have the best education in the world. Recognizing widespread concerns about education, he called it “one of the critical national security issues for our future”. He then dealt in rapid-fire fashion with most of the policy areas on the nation's agenda. He wants to expand Head Start, extend the family and medical leave law, expand medical research and technology, mount a full-scale assault on juvenile crime, and clean up 500 toxic waste sites. He wants low-tax empowerment zones in urban areas to encourage revitalization.

His education proposals call for a 40 percent increase in federal spending on education by the year 2002. He set out a ten-point plan to renew education at all levels; especially noteworthy for me was his emphasis on teachers. So much of the discussion on reforming education has omitted the key importance of teachers. More controversial was his call for education standards. Most everybody is demanding improvement in the quality of education, recognizing the wide variety in what schools teach and students learn among the states and the counties. Most past efforts to create national education standards have been either ignored or diluted, and the U.S. is one of the few industrialized countries without specific national requirements for what students should know. The challenge here is to help students and teachers to know what to strive for in class without creating more federal intrusion into the schools.

The most moving portion of the speech came at the end when he called for one America, emphasizing that diversity is our strength, not a weakness, and that we must all be “repairers of the breach”. Even after a long speech, the audience was clearly moved by the president's conclusions and plea for unity amidst diversity.

His bluntest statements were in opposition to the balanced budget amendment to the constitution, even as he made a strong plea to balance the budget. He stated that a constitutional amendment would cripple the country in time of crisis and force unwanted results upon the country. I strongly applauded his call for bipartisan campaign finance reform, and I was not surprised to see him make a plea for improving welfare reform. And I liked his challenge to employers to make the new welfare system work by giving someone on welfare the chance to work.

The most dramatic change in the President's thinking is on health care. He has clearly abandoned his plans for sweeping changes, and is now proposing more incremental steps by extending insurance to at least half of the ten million children in our country who have no health insurance.

WORLD LEADERSHIP

The President gave major emphasis to keeping American leadership in the world strong. He spoke for some time and in considerable detail about what that means. He wants an undivided democratic Europe and an America that looks to the East no less than the West. He also wants an America that prospers in a global economy, free to conclude new trade agreements that open new markets to our goods and services, even as we preserve our values. He expressed his confidence that with the best workers and the best products, we can out-compete anybody in the world in a truly open market. The President made a very strong and direct

appeal to Congress to approve the chemical weapons convention, and to support the necessary resources to carry on our diplomacy. He urged Congress to take the steps to keep America strong, secure, and prosperous for another fifty years.

CONCLUSION

I thought the State of the Union address was one of the President's better speeches. It gave a very clear indication of his priorities. The President hit the right themes of improving education and better preparing our nation for the future, but he spent very little time discussing the tough decisions and shared sacrifices that will be needed to tackle the problems of balancing the budget, shoring up Social Security and Medicare, and reforming the campaign finance system.

The President tried to convey a sense of decisive and coherent action by setting out the agenda for the next four years but without proposing ambitious new federal programs. He was clearly aware throughout the speech of the limits imposed by the fiscal realities. The President still speaks of offering opportunity, demanding responsibility, and preparing us for the 21st century, but his proposals reveal a diminished means for accomplishing those goals.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TRICIA PATTERSON

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring to the House's attention the good work of a valued community organization in my district, the Italian American Commercial Club, and their efforts to assist outstanding young people to further their education.

This year the Italian American Commercial Club of Joliet's 1996 scholarship recipient is Tricia Patterson. Tricia is an outstanding young lady and is an honors student at Joliet West High School. While maintaining a full load of honors classes, Tricia still manages active involvement in the National Honors Society, the French National Honors Society, French Club, and Peer Helpers. On top of this, she works part-time at Dominic's.

Tricia is proud of her family and credits her family with teaching her the basic values that have helped her succeed.

This outstanding Joliet West High School student has worked hard to succeed, especially when it comes to academics. Tricia plans to attend college and has already been accepted to two outstanding colleges, Northern Illinois University and the University of Illinois to study accounting.

I'm proud to represent outstanding young people like Tricia Patterson and commend community groups like the Italian American Commercial Club for their contribution to helping young people.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating Tricia Patterson.

HONORING PAMELA Y. LOVING

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an individual who is strong and positive

force within the community, and who by her actions has shown that the rewards from such dedication are immeasurable. On Thursday, February 6, 1997, the Flint, MI Pan-Hellenic Council will honor Ms. Pamela Y. Loving as a part of their Seventh Annual Salute to African-American Elected Officials. The awards dinner is chaired by Mr. James B. Franklin III, and the honorary chair is Dr. Alan Arnold.

Pamela Loving, a resident of Flint MI, has blessed the city with a professional career that spans 35 years, beginning at Lippincott Market as a sweeper, a butcher and a cashier. Ms. Loving has also held positions at Hurley Medical Center and served as the public health nurse for the city of Flint. She has also served as president of Whole Village, Inc. and then began a 23 year tenure at GMI Engineering and Management Institute. These accomplishments have ultimately led to her current position as acting president of Jobs Central, Inc., proving that hard work and perseverance are prime factors for success.

Armed with an associates degree from C.S. Mott Community College, a bachelor's degree from the University of Detroit and a graduate-level curriculum from such schools as Central Michigan, Purdue, Wisconsin, Michigan State, and Harvard, Ms. Loving decided to pursue a more active role in the community of winning a seat on the Flint Board of Education in 1989, where she still serves as treasurer. In addition to the board, Ms. Loving possesses a host of affiliations including the Flint Cultural Center, Hurley Medical Center Board of Directors, Alzheimer's Association and Forum Magazine Advisory Board, to name a few.

This year's dinner will also honor the Honorable Valdemar Washington with the distinguished Floyd J. McCree Memorial Leadership Award. Additionally, the Community Service Award will be given to Ailene Butler, Joann Owens-Reed, and Ali Saaba. All of these individuals represent the very best in civic and social responsibility, and are more than deserving of the highest respect and admiration.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and honor that I appear before you today to recognize Ms. Pamela Loving. As evidenced by her personal motto that “Learning is a lifelong process,” she has been and shall continue to be a solid inspiration to not only me, but to all those she comes in contact with. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and my fellow members of the 105th Congress to join me in recognizing this outstanding individual, Ms. Pamela Y. Loving.

TRIBUTE TO HONOR JACKIE ROBINSON MARKING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DESEGREGATION OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 1997

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to a talented man, Mr. Jackie Robinson, and to the 50th anniversary of the desegregation of major league baseball. Not only did Jackie's efforts gain entrance for African-Americans into professional baseball, but they paved the way for African-American participation in all professional sports.

Fifty years ago, as the United States fought racism in World War II, America's national