

elevated blood lead levels are part of federally funded health care programs, our bill targets not only Medicaid, but also Head Start, Early Head Start and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Head Start and WIC programs would be allowed to perform screening or to mandate that parents show proof of screenings in order to enroll their children.

Education, early screening and prompt follow-up care will save millions in health care costs; but, more importantly will save our greatest resource—our children.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE STABENOW

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on May 24, 1999 and was not able to vote on H.R. 1251 and H.R. 100.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 1251.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 100.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TEACHER EMPOWERMENT ACT

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today I am joining with the distinguished Chairman of the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Training and Life-long Learning, Mr. McKEON, Mr. CASTLE, the Speaker of the House, the Majority Leader, Mr. WATTS, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. PRYCE, and other distinguished Members of the House to introduce the Teacher Empowerment Act. As someone who has spent a lifetime in education as a parent, a teacher, a school administrator, and a Member of Congress, I know that after parents, the most important factor in whether a child succeeds in school is the quality of the teachers in the classroom. An inspirational, knowledgeable, and qualified teacher is worth more than anything else we could give a student to ensure academic achievement.

The Teacher Empowerment Act will go a long way toward helping local schools improve the quality of their teachers, or to hire additional qualified teachers, and to do this in the way that best meets their needs. The Teacher Empowerment Act will provide \$2 billion per year over 5 years to States and local school districts to help pay for the costs of high quality teacher training and for the hiring of new teachers. We do this by consolidating the following programs: Eisenhower Professional Development, Goals 2000, and "100,000 New Teachers."

We have tried to develop legislation that will have bipartisan support, and we will continue to do so as the bill moves along. However, our approach differs significantly from the Administration's. The Administration's legislative proposal is prescriptive and centered on Washington. We lift restrictions and encourage local innovation.

The Administration's proposal is so focused on reducing class size that it loses sight of the bigger quality issue. We try to find the right balance between reducing class size, retaining, and retraining quality teachers. And in our bill, class size is a local issue, not a Washington issue.

In math and science, the Administration increases set-asides and makes no provision for local school districts that do not have significant needs in those areas. Our approach is different because we maintain the focus on math and science, but also provide additional flexibility for schools that have met their needs in those subject areas.

The Administration takes dollars from the classroom by allowing the Secretary of Education to maintain half of all funds for discretionary grants and to expand funding for national projects. Our bill reduces funding for national projects and sends 95 percent of the funds to local school districts.

The Administration wants to put 100,000 new teachers into classrooms, but requiring this would force States and local school districts to put many unqualified teachers in the classroom. We allow schools to decide whether they should use the funds to reduce class size, or improve the quality of their existing teachers, or hire additional special education teachers.

Finally, one point that I would like to make is that improving the quality of our teachers does not mean that we need national certification. In fact, our bill prohibits it. Again, it's a question of who controls our schools: bureaucracies in Washington, or people at the State and local level who know the needs of their communities.

The Teacher Empowerment Act is good legislation. It provides a needed balance between the quality and quantity of our teaching force. I hope that we can work together on this legislation, in a bipartisan manner, so that we see enactment of this legislation, along with our other reforms in ESEA, in this Congress.

RECTIFYING IRS RULING FOR VETERANS

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleague from California, Mr. BRIAN BILBRAY, to introduce a bill to rectify an unjust Internal Revenue Service (IRS) ruling which adversely affected our nation's veterans.

In a 1962 IRS ruling, an allowance was made for the deduction of flight training expenses from a veteran's income tax even if veterans' benefits were received to pay the training costs. Subsequently, many veterans used their G.I. benefits to go to flight school and correctly deducted these expenses on their income tax forms. In 1980, the IRS revised its 1962 ruling by terminating this tax deduction in Revenue Ruling 80-173. However, the IRS decided to apply this new ruling retroactively, which meant the veterans who had utilized this deduction would now have to pay back their tax refund to the IRS. This decision was detrimental to the taxpayers who took the deduction as instructed, and therefore simply unfair.

Naturally, these taxpayers took their case to court. In April 1985, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, in *Baker v. United States*, considered this issue and sided with the taxpayer. The IRS did not appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. Consequently, the veterans who fought the battle in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals received refunds of the tax they had been required to pay. At the same time, however, veterans who suffered from the retroactive IRS ruling but who fell outside the purview of that court decision were not given refunds. Similarly situated veterans were therefore being treated differently by the IRS due to geographic location.

This bipartisan legislation will permit those veterans who settled with the IRS on less favorable terms or were precluded from having the IRS consider their claims because of the time limits in the law, a one-time opportunity to file for a refund. This way the remaining veterans and the IRS would have a second chance to come to a much more equitable settlement.

Nationwide, this legislation will affect the approximately 200 remaining veterans who have still not received an equitable settlement from the IRS—roughly 1/3 of these veterans reside in the State of California.

Basically this legislation boils down to restoring a sense of fairness. We need to do what is right and put an end to this inequitable situation once and for all. These veterans stood up for America—it's time we stand up for them.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL LESTER L. LYLES

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Lieutenant General Lester L. Lyles, United States Air Force, on the occasion of his promotion to General. On May 27, 1999, LTG Lyles will become only the 2nd African American four star commander in the United States Air Force currently on active duty.

LTG Lyles has fought tirelessly and contributed greatly to the defense of our nation and to equal opportunity for other soldiers of color.

He currently is serving as the director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, Department of Defense at the Pentagon. The organization is presidentially chartered and mandated by Congress to acquire highly effective ballistic missile defense systems for forward-deployed and expeditionary elements of the U.S. Armed Forces.

LTG Lyles entered the Air Force in 1968 as a distinguished graduate of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He served in a variety of both tactical and staff positions throughout his illustrious career. In 1992, LTG Lyles became the vice-commander of Ogden Air Logistics Center, Hill Air Force Base. He served as commander of the center from 1993-1994, then was assigned to command the Headquarters Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base. He served in this capacity until August 1996 when he assumed his current position.

LTG Lyles is a highly decorated soldier. He has received the department's Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and a myriad of other awards.

LTG Lyles has an impressive educational background. He is a graduate of prestigious senior service schools including the Armed Forces Staff College, the National War College, and the Defense Systems Management College. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Howard University, Washington, DC, and a Master of Science degree in mechanical and nuclear engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology, at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.

LGT Lyles serves proudly as a member of the United States Armed Forces. He is a distinguished soldier whose accomplishments reflect great credit upon himself, the United States Air Force, and the United States of America.

On this occasion, Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join his family, friends, and colleagues as we recognize LTG Lester Lyles on his promotion to four star General in the United States Air Force.

THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF FREDERIC CHOPIN

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of one of the world's most enduring musicians, Frédéric Chopin. Chopin was born in Zelazowa Wola, a village six miles from Warsaw, Poland on March 1, 1810. He suffered from tuberculosis and died in Paris at the age of 39 on October 17, 1849. This year his life and work will be celebrated around the world, and it brings me and my Polish heritage great pride to recognize this event.

Chopin's abilities were recognized at an early age. At 9, he played a concerto at a public concert. He published his first composition at 15. And at the age of 21, Chopin moved to Paris where he was well-received. He taught piano lessons and often played in private homes, preferring this to public concerts.

One of the best-known and best-loved composers of the romantic period, Chopin was devoted to the piano, and his more than 200 compositions demonstrate his grace and skill. And his admirers included fellow composer Franz List and Robert Schumann. Chopin reportedly fell deeply in love with the novelist George Sand (Aurore Dudevant), and he described her as his inspiration.

His works include two sets of etudes, two sonatas, four ballads, many pieces he titled preludes, impromptus, or scherzos, and a great number of dances. Included among the latter are a number of waltzes, but also mazurkas and six polonaises, dances from his native Poland. Some of these dance pieces are among Chopin's best-known works, including the Polonaise in A-flat major and the Waltz in C-sharp minor.

Among Chopin's most engaging works are the Préludes. Intended to serve as improvised beginnings to an intimate recital, these pieces range from gentle melancholy to the dramatic. Many of Chopin's most beautiful compositions come from the series of short, reflective pieces he called nocturnes. His nocturnes were usually gentle with a flowing bass and demonstrate Chopin's flair for elegant, song-like melodies.

Indeed, Chopin composed some of the most beautiful piano music ever written, and I applaud those who will pay tribute to this remarkable composer and his Polish heritage in this important anniversary year.

TRIBUTE TO TEACHING FELLOWS FROM STANLY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate four Stanly County students who are among the 1999 recipients of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows scholarships. Each Fellow receives a \$26,000 scholarship loan from the state of North Carolina.

The full loan is forgiven after the recipient has completed 4 years of teaching in North Carolina public schools.

In addition, all Fellows take part in academic summer enrichment programs during their college careers.

The Teaching Fellows Scholarship program was created by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1986 and has become one of the top teacher recruiting programs in the country.

This innovative program attracts talented high school seniors to become public school teachers. This is a common sense, state based program that will help encourage our best and brightest to come back to their communities to teach.

The 1999 recipients from Stanly County, North Carolina are Catherine Ellen Hinson and Mai Lee Xiong, both of Albemarle High School, Adam Allen Cycotte of South Stanly High School, and Anna Beth Spence of West Stanly High School.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate these individuals for the courage and desire to enter the teaching profession.

REMEMBRANCE OF OLD MARBLEHEAD

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, recently I had the pleasure of joining with my constituents to celebrate Marblehead, Massachusetts' 350th Anniversary! At the festivities a remarkable young eighth grader from Marblehead Middle School shared her poem, "Remembrance of Old Marblehead" with those assembled. I can attest to the fact that her words and delivery truly "stole the show" and I take great pride in sharing Ms. Katherine Fowley's fine work with my Colleagues:

REMEMBRANCE OF OLD MARBLEHEAD

I stand on the rocks and I listen to the ancient whispers of the sea.
They sing the songs of fishermen, of cannon fire, of boats rich with merchandise.
I lie on the banks of Fort Sewall.
Suddenly, the benches transform into can-

nons.
Trees become young soldiers.
Townpeople cheer as the proud bow of the Constitution steers into harbor.

At night men gather around a blazing fire.
Their triumphant songs rise to meet the surge of ocean waves.

When I walk on the old roads, I hear the drumming of Glover's Regiment marching over faded cobblestones.

On the steps of the Town House the crier is ringing his bell.

It calls out in the salty air like a foghorn leading sailors home. . . .

When I walk by the historic houses, I see the spirits of Marblehead.

A woman stands on a widow's walk. Her white dress flaps around her like the wings of wild seagulls.

She is waiting for her husband to return.
She is waiting to see the tall mast emerge from the fog.

She is waiting.
The aged bricks and wooden clapboards of these houses are filled with voices.
And the song of these voices is remember.

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO CLARIFY THAT NATURAL GAS GATHERING LINES ARE 7-YEAR PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF DEPRECIATION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 1999

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by Representatives MCCREERY, HOUGHTON, WATKINS, MCINNIS, and CAMP in the introduction of legislation that will clarify the proper treatment of natural gas gathering lines for purposes of depreciation.

For several years, a level of uncertainty has hampered the natural gas processing industry as well as imposed significant costs on the energy industry as a whole. Consequently, I have worked to bring certainty to the tax treatment of natural gas gathering lines. During this time, I have corresponded and met with a variety of people from the Department of Treasury in an effort to secure the issuance of much needed guidance for the members of the natural gas processing industry regarding the treatment of these assets.

Unfortunately, I have not received satisfactory responses. Protracted Internal Revenue Service audits and litigation on this issue continues without any end in sight. As a result, I chose to introduce legislation in the 105th Congress in order to clarify that, under current law, natural gas gathering lines are properly treated as seven-year assets for purposes of depreciation. This year, I introduced similar legislation, H.R. 674, as a part of the 106th Congress. Today's bill supersedes my earlier bill, H.R. 674, and contains a few minor technical changes that are necessary to ensure that this legislation achieves its intended effect.

This bill specifically provides that natural gas gathering lines are subject to a seven-