

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, during the Independence Day district work period, this Member had the opportunity to continue his series of town hall meetings in his congressional district in Nebraska. At these meetings, and at my earlier listening sessions, two main topics have been vigorously addressed by constituents. The first of these is the desperate conditions that farmers are now facing in this country, which this Member addressed Monday on the House floor. Another issue that was also discussed at these town hall meetings was the very inadequate level of veterans medical care funding available today. Veterans in my state understandably are *not* satisfied with the current situation, and it is clear that the Federal Government is not meeting its responsibility to the health care needs of our military veterans.

Over the last several years, Congress has provided a slight increase in funding each year for veterans health care. However, the level of funding in the past and present has been far from the amount needed for these vital health programs. The simple fact is that the Federal Government must provide greater funding for veterans health care. We have a bulge in World War II veterans in need of more health care services at this time. The number of veterans treated in VA facilities in the year 2000 is projected to rise by more than 30 percent compared to 1997. Funding must be substantially increased to keep up with this demand. However, the President's budget request for veterans medical care funding is less than 2 percent above what it was in 1997. In fact, over the past few years, the President's budget request has always been less than what Congress actually appropriated for these important health programs.

The fiscal year 2000 Budget Resolution contained a 1.7 billion dollar increase for veterans health care. This Member strongly encourages the Appropriations Committee to support this increase in funding, and would support an even greater amount to insure that at least minimally acceptable veterans' health needs of all eligible veterans are met. This Member would also like to send a message to the Administration, encouraging them to stop ignoring the essential health care services veterans deserve, and to propose and support the greater funding levels needed to adequately serve our veterans.

The inadequacy of VA health care funds in this Member's home state of Nebraska is accentuated by a Clinton Administration funding formula called the Veterans Equity Resource Allocation, or VERA. Its results are anything but equitable to veterans in Nebraska. The VERA system was created and implemented in April of 1997 in an ill-advised attempt to more equally allocate VA health care re-

sources among different regions of the country.

However, this system is not equitable. Funds are allocated among the 22 VA regions strictly on a veteran per-capita basis, which means that the Sunbelt regions where veterans are retiring have far more resources to provide the necessary base of service. Sparsely populated states, like Nebraska in the Northern Great Plains, have a smaller and shrinking veterans population. These lower-population states simply do not have the numbers to receive adequate funding under this system in order to provide for even the minimum services and facilities required. No matter what state a veteran lives in, he or she is entitled to an acceptable level of health service. This level is not being met in Nebraska under VERA. This Member calls on the Clinton Administration to take off their blinders and address this problem with an adjusted formula. This Member will also continue to actively oppose VERA, and will work to restore more funding for VA facilities in Nebraska.

Veterans fought to protect our freedom and way of life. As they served our nation in a time of need, the Federal Government must remember them in their time of need. Therefore, the needs of these veterans, especially health benefits, must be met to the fullest extent possible. The people of the U.S. owe a tremendous debt to our veterans. We should keep the promises made to them.

COLORADO HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 99-1060

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, the Colorado House recently adopted H.R. 1000, the "Aviation Investment and Reform Act." This measure is of great interest to my constituents and the entire state of Colorado. Indeed the Colorado General Assembly has called upon the Members of Colorado's Congressional Delegation to support H.R. 1000.

It was upon the recommendation of the Colorado Legislature, and for the reasons stated in Colorado's House Joint Resolution 99-1060, that I was persuaded to cast my vote, on behalf of Colorado's Fourth Congressional District, in favor of H.R. 1000.

I furthermore commend Colorado's position on the matter to Members of the House, and hereby submit for the RECORD, the full text of Colorado H. J. R. 99-1060.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 99-1060

Whereas, Safe, timely, and adequate intrastate air service is essential to the citizens of Colorado; and

Whereas, The 1998 Colorado General Assembly Interim Committee on Intrastate Air Service reviewed and studied the need to improve the safety and adequacy of intrastate air service in Colorado; and

Whereas, There exists a federal "Airport and Airway Trust Fund", created by section

9502 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to assist airports and airport air service throughout the United States, including many of the intrastate air service needs in Colorado; and

Whereas, The federal "Airport and Airway Trust Fund" is not being used for its intended purposes and historically has been used to mask past federal budget deficits; and

Whereas, United States Representative Bud Shuster (R-PA), has introduced H.R. 1000, the "Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century", which includes "Title IX—Truth in Budgeting", that requires that the federal "Airport and Airway Trust Fund" be used for its intended purposes; now, therefore, be it.

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-second General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein: That the members of the Sixty-second General Assembly call upon Colorado's Congressional Delegation to support H.R. 1000, the "Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century", and specifically "Title IX—Truth in Budgeting", and, upon its passage, to work to provide funds to improve the safety, timeliness, and adequacy of intrastate air service throughout Colorado; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to each member of Colorado's Congressional Delegation.

MARK D. ROLNIK

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Mark D. Rolnik was born on January 1, 1954. He grew up in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, and attended the Bronx High School of Science.

Thereafter he attended the University of Buffalo, where he graduated in 1976. He then attended Benjamin Cardozo School of Law, of Yeshiva University, and received his law degree in 1979.

After three years of working for the law firm of Lester Schwartz & Dwyer, Esq. Mark opened his own office on Lower Broadway in Manhattan, and began practicing personal injury law. He has been engaged in this practice since 1982, and continues to practice personal injury to date.

In addition to his law practice, he is on the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Kings Basketball Team, a professional basketball team that plays in Brooklyn, New York. This is the first professional sports team to play in Brooklyn since the Dodgers left Ebbets Field in 1958.

He is also on the Board of Directors of the Reality Chek Foundation, a Brooklyn charity dedicated to providing learning experiences to inner city youths.

He and his wife Adria have two children, Elizabeth, age 13, and Alexandra, age 11. They currently reside in Short Hills, New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending Mr. Rolnik for his contributions to supporting programs for inner city youth.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.