

great deal of class, dedication and excellence. For that, I say thank you, congratulations, and we will always cherish the memory of this national championship and this dream season.

HONORING MARY TRUSCOTT

HON. TILLIE K. FOWLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of my constituents who has dedicated her life to something of which we speak so often in this Chamber, the pursuit of excellence in education. For the past 40 years, Mary Truscott has faithfully served as secretary and administrative assistant at Father Lopez High School in Daytona Beach, FL. Throughout this time, Mary had a profound positive influence on countless lives and helped to shape our future leaders. She has been the glue that binds the school together and is a shining constant in an all too rapidly changing world.

Mary Truscott's 40 years of selfless service to the Father Lopez school community and to the Diocese of Orlando is truly a remarkable accomplishment. To many students and teachers, she has been a real American hero. As she celebrates her anniversary this coming weekend, I am proud to recognize her accomplishments and to express my personal gratitude as well as that of the entire Daytona Beach community.

IT'S TIME FOR A TAX CUT

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, as we begin the new year and the 106th Congress, there are many things that the American people can be optimistic about. Our economy is growing at a brisk pace. Unemployment is low. Inflation is almost non-existent. And interest rates are down.

While more Americans are working and earning more money because of our strong economy, excessive taxation is making it harder for families to get ahead. When looking at the burden taxes impose on the lives of the American people, I am reminded of an observation offered by Mark Twain. This great American author asked, "What's the difference between a taxidermist and a tax collector?" He answered, "the taxidermist takes only your skin."

The average family in America is currently paying more money in taxes than it spends on housing, food, and clothing combined. In fact, when State and local taxes are added to Federal taxes, the average family sees 40 percent of its income confiscated by the Government. This is outrageous. Working Americans should be allowed to take care of their basic needs before being asked to finance the Government.

With the budget balanced and the Federal Government projected to run a surplus of \$1.6 trillion over the next 10 years, the 106th Congress has a historic opportunity to cut taxes so

working Americans can keep more of their hard-earned money.

Today, I have introduced five bills which ease the burden of Federal taxation. These bills will strengthen families and promote economic growth by cutting income taxes and removing the penalties imposed on saving and investing.

The first bill in my tax relief package is entitled the Taxpayer Relief Act. This bill cuts marginal income tax rates by 10 percent across the board. This broad-based tax cut benefits every working American and rewards hard work and success.

The next bill in my package is the Taxpayer Fairness Act. This bill allows taxpayers to deduct the amount of payroll taxes they pay each year from their Federal income taxes. It's simply wrong to tax people on income they never receive. This bill ends this ridiculous policy and will benefit millions of middle income taxpayers, many who pay more in payroll taxes than they pay in income taxes.

The third bill in my package is the Job Creation Act. This bill will stimulate investment in new businesses and good paying jobs by eliminating the capital gains tax.

The fourth bill in my package is the Senior Citizen Tax Relief Act. This bill contains three provisions. It repeals the 1993 tax increase on Social Security benefits. It eliminates the earnings limitation for Social Security benefits, thereby encouraging more seniors to continue working and contributing to our Nation's economy. And it eliminates the taxes on estates and gifts. While death and taxes may be the only two certainties of life, any individual shouldn't have to encounter both at the same time.

The last bill in my package is the Marriage Penalty Relief Act. Under current law, approximately 21 million married couples pay about \$1,400 more a year in taxes than they would if they were single. My bill provides some relief from this stiff penalty by increasing the standard deduction provided to married couples so that it equals twice the amount of the deduction provided to single taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are paying too much in taxes and they want their Members of Congress to do something about it. The five bills I have just discussed provide significant tax relief to the American people. These tax cuts benefit every working American. They strengthen working families. They promote economic growth. And they restore fairness and simplicity to the tax code.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in this fight for lower taxes and yield back the balance of my time.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE ALLOCATION FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999,
H.R. 24

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 24 the Veterans Health Care Allocation Fairness Act of 1999.

In 1996, the Veterans Administration was mandated by Congress to develop and implement a more equitable method for allocating health care resources. In response, the VA

devised the veterans equity resource allocation (VERA) model.

While VERA was a noble effort, it is based on a flawed model. As a research method, VERA is unfairly biased against older veterans in major metropolitan areas. These veterans are those in need of inpatient, comprehensive health care, and they will suffer if VERA is allowed to go forward as planned.

This legislation is designed to correct these inherent flaws within VERA. Specifically, it does this in three ways:

First, the bill would raise the income level in the means test by 20% for any veteran who lives in a standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) as defined by the Bureau of the Census. This would make the VA more accessible to veterans who live in high-cost areas, thus increasing the number of veterans who use VA in those regions.

Second, the bill would move veterans with catastrophic health care expenses from category "C" (those who must meet the means test for non-service connected care) to category "A" (those eligible for free non-service connected care). These veterans are defined as those individuals whose medical expenses for the previous year exceeded 7.5% of their adjusted gross income.

Third, the bill would level the playing field between the northeast and southwest by removing the high-cost, "inefficient" specialty care programs from those funds which can be considered in reallocation calculations under VERA. The programs removed would include: Readjustment counseling and treatment, counseling and psychiatric care for the mentally ill, drug and alcohol related programs, programs for the homeless, PTSD programs, spinal cord injury programs, AIDS programs and geriatric and extended care programs.

In a memorandum prepared for me by the Congressional Research Service on this legislation, it estimates that this bill would result in an additional 5-6% of veterans in the northeast becoming eligible for free health care. That translates to approximately 75,000 additional veterans for New York alone. CRS also estimates that if 20% of these veterans seek to use VA services, a conservative assumption, it would result in an increased caseload for both VISN #2 and #3 of 15-20%. This would force a recomputation of VERA distributions, and result in more VA health care funds remaining in northern urban areas.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation which will help ensure that all veterans receive equal opportunity to the health care which they have earned, regardless of where they have chosen to live.

H.R. 24

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CRITERIA FOR REQUIRED COPAYMENT FOR MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) EXCEPTION BASED ON PRIOR CATASTROPHIC HEALTH CARE EXPENSES.—Subsection (a) of section 1722 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "or" at the end of paragraph (2);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting ";" or"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) the veteran's expenses for medical care (as defined in section 213 of the Internal

Revenue Code of 1986) for the previous year are in excess of 7½ percent of the veteran's adjusted gross income for the previous year (as determined for purposes of the personal income tax under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986).".

(b) ADJUSTMENT IN INCOME THRESHOLDS FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN SMSAS.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) The amounts in effect for purposes of this subsection for any calendar year shall be increased by 20 percent for any veteran who resides in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), as defined by the Bureau of the Census.”.

(c) AMENDMENTS WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the amendments made by this section for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 within the amount of funds otherwise available (or programmed to be available) for medical care for the Department of Veterans Affairs for those fiscal years.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on January 1, 2000.

SEC. 2. SERVICES FOR MENTALLY ILL VETERANS.

(a) MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE ON CARE OF SEVERELY CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL VETERANS.—Section 7321 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “and members of the general public with expertise in the care of the chronically mentally ill” in the second sentence after “chronically mentally ill”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) The Secretary shall determine the terms of service and (for members appointed from the general public) the pay and allowances of the members of the committee, except that a term of service may not exceed five years. The Secretary may reappoint any member for additional terms of service.”.

(b) CENTERS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND CLINICAL ACTIVITIES.—Paragraph (3) of section 7320(b) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(3) The Secretary shall designate at least one center under this section in each service network region of the Veterans Health Association.”.

SEC. 3. ALLOCATION OF MEDICAL CARE RESOURCES FOR THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 8116 the following new section:

§8117. Allocation of medical care resources

“In applying the plan for the allocation of health care resources (including personnel and funds) known as the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system, developed by the Secretary pursuant to the requirements of section 429 of Public Law 104-204 (110 Stat. 2929) and submitted to Congress in March 1997, the Secretary shall exclude from consideration in the determination of the allocation of such resources the following (resources for which shall be allocated in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate):

“(1) Programs to provide readjustment counseling and treatment.

“(2) Programs to provide counseling and treatment (including psychiatric care) for the mentally ill.

“(3) Programs relating to drug and alcohol abuse and dependence.

“(4) Programs for the homeless.

“(5) Programs relating to post-traumatic stress disorder.

“(6) Programs relating to spinal cord dysfunction.

“(7) Programs relating to AIDS.

“(8) Programs relating to geriatric and extended care.”.

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8116 the following new item:

“8117. Allocation of medical care resources.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 8117 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to the allocation of resources for each fiscal year after fiscal year 1999.

COMMENDING THE CITY OF ARROYO, PUERTO RICO ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the special relationship between the city of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, and the United States. December 25, 1998, will mark the centennial Christmas celebrated with the United States.

In the summer of 1898, American troops landed in the city of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, to help free the Puerto Ricans from Spanish colonialism. General John Rutter Brooke and his troops spent Christmas in Arroyo that year, and that event marked the beginning of a close and lasting relationship between the people of the city of Arroyo and the United States. To memorialize General Brooke, there is a city street named in his honor.

The city of Arroyo resembles many typical U.S. small towns, with its “Main Street USA”. This central street, running north-south through the town, is named Calle Morse, after Samuel Morse, the inventor of the Morse code. He came to Arroyo to visit his daughter, who resided at the Enriqueta estate, and was present when the first telegraph line was installed in Puerto Rico in 1858. The city of Arroyo has the esteem of being the first location in Puerto Rico to send a telegraph, welcoming Puerto Rico to the age of telecommunications.

The historical homes which line Main Street in Arroyo are fashioned after southern American styles of architecture, and the citizens of Arroyo are very proud of this feature of Main Street. The old U.S. customhouse in town has been well-preserved and today is an important center of the city's culture, serving as a museum which traces the historical connections with the United States.

The town of Arroyo has taken an active role in defending the United States. From the First World War, to the Second World War, to the war in Korea, and to Vietnam, to Desert Storm, young men from Arroyo have answered the call to duty, and brave soldiers such as Virgilio Sanchez in Korea and Raul Serrano in Vietnam, have heroically given their lives in these wars.

This year marks the 100th Christmas anniversary since that first Christmas that the U.S. officially spent in Arroyo. The town did their best to make General Brooke and his troops feel welcome, having to spend Christmas away from their immediate families. To commemorate this special Christmas celebration, students of welding at a local vocational technical school have crafted iron ornaments that

will be placed throughout Main Street in recognition of the city's unique relationship with the United States. These beautiful handmade ornaments will be lighted on Christmas Eve, 1998, in remembrance of this joyous occasion.

I commend the people of the city of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, for their special relationship with the United States and congratulate them on their 100th Christmas anniversary.

UNDERLYING THE IMPEACHMENT CRISIS—HISTORY: THE WAY WE SEE IT

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Republicans say the underlying issue is not about sex, it's about perjury and obstruction of justice. Democrats say the underlying issue is about sex—a private consensual sexual relationship—and the President lied about it, possibly committing perjury in the process. But since lying about sex is not an act that involved using his official position against the state, as Nixon did, Democrats say Clinton's sins do not reach the Constitutional standard for impeachment.

That is the essence of the arguments we heard presented by members of the House Judiciary Committee and members on the floor of the Congress who voted, along partisan party lines, to impeach President Clinton. That is what the current Republicans and Democrats are saying. What will history say?

Underlying the Clinton impeachment is neither sex, nor lying, nor perjury, but American history itself. Essentially the same economic and political forces that drove the presidential impeachment process against Andrew Johnson in 1868 are driving the impeachment process 130 years later. There has been a “role reversal”—the Republicans of 1998 were the Democrats of 1868 and I will show how their roles reversed—but the underlying issue is essentially the same; reconstruction. Our nation's first effort at economic reconstruction after the Civil War was at issue in 1868, our nation's second effort at economic reconstruction after the Civil War, beginning with Brown in 1954, is at issue in 1998.

The end of the Civil War and the adoption of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution on December 18, 1865 ended legal slavery. Slavery, the Democratic Party, its geography and its ideology were all defeated. But Lincoln's assassination five days after Appomattox denied him and the Republican Party the opportunity to pursue a “Big Federal Government” policy of economic reconstruction and political enfranchisement for all Americans, leaving no American behind.

When legal slavery ended, there were nine million people in the old Confederacy, which was led by the party of Thomas Jefferson. Then, the Democratic Party defined itself in exclusive terms—as slave holders with private property rights, which were protected legally by “states' rights” governments. Four million of the southerners were uneducated and untrained former slaves who needed to be educated, trained and brought into the economic mainstream and politically enfranchised with the right and ability to vote. That didn't include