

fact that people were afraid to say the word, fearing almost that was a contagious condition. It's safe to assume that a majority of the United States population disagrees with "Alternative" lifestyles. But does that mean that it acceptable to deny a group of people the basic human rights they are entitled to?

Have we learned nothing from the people of segregation that our country had endured not so long ago? There were people, such as Martin Luther King Jr., who were brave enough to stand up and demand the freedom that African-Americans were entitled to. There were the struggles women had endured in order to gain their right to an abortion. We live in a country that grants its citizens basic human rights that are necessary in order to live, freedom to be ones own person. Should we deny those freedoms to people who are different from ourselves? We have no right to impose our beliefs onto other people, nor does anyone have the right to deny the beliefs of another. If we do so, we will only be stepping back into our journey toward the United States our founding fathers had envisioned.

As citizens of this great country, we all have our service to America. But the freedom instilled in the United States grants us the right to chose what that is. My service to America is to uphold the belief that all men are created equal. My service to America is to ensure that I will never be in the position of oppressing another group of people. My service to America is to inform the generation to follow of the importance of freedom. My service to America is to never forget historical struggles. My service to America is to never forget that I live in America, the land of the free.

Carmen M. Herlihy is a senior attending Baldwin High School on the island of Maui. She hopes to enter New York University this fall to pursue a career in the theater or writing.

SALUTE TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, in today's business world, maintaining a productive workforce is a vital function. Workplace injuries seriously hamper the efficiency of both the employer and the employee. Workers hurt on the job need assistance in returning to their positions and aid in preventing future injuries. Occupational therapists have long been in the forefront of providing these vital services to companies and their workers.

April 1 marked the beginning of Occupational Therapy Month. I would like to take this opportunity to hail the men and women who serve as occupational therapists, including, I am proud to note, my own daughter.

Occupational therapists are skilled in task analysis and ergonomics. They advise businesses on cost-effective ways to reduce the likelihood of worker disability. Occupational therapists work to prevent injury by modifying work areas, teaching techniques to alleviate physical discomfort, and developing equipment to simplify work. As the computer becomes more integrated in the daily lives of Americans, the occupational therapist can advise on how to set up a computer workstation that allows healthy computing. Using the right equipment and posture can prevent neck and shoulder

pain, as well as damaging hand and arm conditions that can result from computer overuse. Occupational therapists improve the effectiveness and health of businesses and their employees.

In recognition of the critical role these individuals play in supporting the American workforce, I salute the 60,000 members of the American Occupational Therapy Association during their special month of April.

IN HONOR OF RENAMING THE WADE PARK VA MEDICAL CENTER FOR LOUIS STOKES

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the renaming of the Cleveland VA Medical Center to the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the dedication of the new parking garage.

Louis Stokes is not only a military veteran of World War II, but he is also a veteran of nearly two decades of public service to the people of Cleveland in the House of Representatives, and a maker of history. During his time in Congress, he was considered the dean of the Ohio Congressional Delegation.

Louis Stokes was the first African-American from Ohio to win a seat in Congress on November 6, 1968. He has impressed all who have known and worked with him with his commitment, erudition and patience. He has been a political mentor to me, and I have known and appreciated his abiding loyalty, good advice and friendship for many years.

Louis Stokes is also widely respected for his broad knowledge of veterans affairs and health issues. It is very fitting, therefore, that the Cleveland VA Medical Center be renamed the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating our former colleague, Louis Stokes, as he accepts this great honor.

ROCKAWAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTS BRAVEST AND FINEST LUNCHEON

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to the Rockaway Chamber of Commerce on the occasion of it's Bravest & Finest Luncheon.

The members of the Rockaway Chamber of Commerce have long been known for their commitment to community service and to enhancing the quality of life for all New York City residents.

This luncheon is not only a festive happening, it is a chance for all of us to celebrate and pay tribute to a group of individuals who have dedicated their lives to protecting their friends and neighbors. This year's honorees truly represent the best of what our community has to offer.

Lieutenant Carl Trincone was appointed to the New York City Fire Department in Sep-

tember 1982. After being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in 1991, he was assigned to Engine 264 where he continues to protect the people of the Rockaways from harm's way.

Firefighters 1st Grade Gregory Ruggiero, Steven Incarnato, Brian Gallagher, and Eugene Gentile are well known for their heroism and dedication to the people of the Rockaways. These brave men routinely place their own lives at risk in order to protect their friends and neighbors.

Police Officers George Von Bartheld, Jason Gaertner, Cory Fink, Scott Rodriguez, and Lucion Herriot have each made an exceptional contribution towards the reduction of crime in the Rockaways and have enhanced community safety. In addition, the members of the Transit Borough Queens Detective Squad, lead by Sgt. Scott Guginsky, have helped make our subways a safer place to travel. Each of these officers have proved themselves to be valuable assets to both the Police Department and the people of the Rockaways.

All of today's honorees have long been known as innovators and beacons of good will to all those with whom they come into contact. Through their dedicated efforts, they have each helped to improve my constituents' quality of life. In recognition of their many accomplishments on behalf of my constituents, I offer my congratulations on their being honored by the Rockaway Chamber of Commerce.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO EXTEND AND IMPROVE THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

HON. GEORGE G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to join my colleague Congressman WICKER in introducing legislation to extend and improve the National Writing Project.

The knowledge and skill of a child's teacher is the single most important factor in the quality of his or her education. The National Writing Project is a nationwide program that works to improve student writing abilities by improving the teaching of writing in the nation's schools.

The National Writing Project serves a remarkable number of teachers and students on an exceptionally small budget.

In academic year 1997-98, the National Writing Project trained 181,402 teachers and administrators nationwide through 157 writing project sites in 46 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. It has served two million teachers and administrators over the last 25 years.

For every federal dollar received, the National Writing Project raises \$6.93 in matching grants. This makes the National Writing Project one of the most cost-effective educational programs in the country.

Furthermore, a national staff of only two people administers the National Writing Project. The use of limited federal funds to leverage large private investments is the most efficient way to use the budgeted funds available for the greatest possible return.

The National Writing Project works. For example, in Chicago, students of National Writing Project teachers have shown significantly

higher gains on the Illinois Goals Assessment Program writing tests when compared to student performance citywide. In an urban Sacramento, California high school, student performance on local writing assessments rose from lowest to highest in the district after an influx of National Writing Project teachers to the school, and college enrollment among this school's senior class rose 400%.

The National Writing Project has received similarly impressive results all across this country. In fact, the National Writing Project has received glowing reviews from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the National Council of Teacher Education, the Council for Basic Education, and independent evaluators.

The national Writing Project is efficient, cost-effective and successful. I look forward to working with my colleagues in enacting this important legislation.

IN HONOR OF DR. RUSSELL L. TRAVIS

HON. ERNIE FLETCHER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call to the attention of my colleagues in the House of Representatives the distinguished career of Russell L. Travis, MD, a neurological surgeon from Lexington, Kentucky, and a good friend. After a lifetime commitment of service to his patients, his profession, his community, and to the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, it is fitting that Dr. Travis be recognized by this body as he completes his term as president of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

Born in Jenkins, Kentucky, a small Appalachian community, Dr. Travis attended Centre College in Danville, and received his medical degree from the University of Louisville. Following his residency at the Medical College Hospital of South Carolina, Dr. Travis returned to Lexington to begin his practice as a neurological surgeon.

One of Dr. Travis' most outstanding contributions has been his commitment to ensuring that all Kentucky citizens have access to affordable, quality health care. As both an advocate for change at a legislative level and as a volunteer in the field, his efforts are widely known and appreciated. Almost every week for the past 25 years, Dr. Travis has traveled hundreds of miles to see patients in places where you wouldn't normally find a neurosurgeon—towns like Whitesburg or Hazard, Kentucky, where adequate medical attention is in short supply. What's more, he enlisted others in service to his vision, playing a key role in the formation of Kentucky Physicians Care, a group of physicians who volunteer their services to provide free medical care to the less fortunate in their communities. This national recognized program was the first all-volunteer, nongovernment-sponsored statewide program of its kind in the country. To ensure its success, Dr. Travis traveled to every part of the State at his own expense, encouraging his colleagues to participate. And what a success it has been—since 1985 more than 300,000 Kentucky citizens have received needed medical attention from Dr. Travis' physician volunteers.

Dr. Travis' insight, experience, and hard work while serving on Kentucky's Task Force on Health Care Access and Affordability proved invaluable in achieving our goals of reforming health care in Kentucky, attempting to undo the damage well-intentioned but ill-considered government intervention had done. The Commonwealth owes much to Dr. Travis for his efforts on this task force.

Dr. Travis has given much back to his profession as well. His tireless involvement in State and national professional societies has improved the standards of medical care. Dr. Travis' colleagues have recognized these contributions with numerous awards, including the Congress of Neurological Surgeons' Distinguished Service Award, the Kentucky Medical Association's Service to Mankind Award, the Fayette County Medical Society's Jack Trevey Award for his leadership role in the Kentucky Physician Care Program, and the Physician's Recognition Award.

On behalf of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives, I congratulate and commend Dr. Russell Travis on his exemplary service for not only the people of Kentucky, but for his contributions to the field of neurological surgery, from which the entire Nation benefits.

GAO FINDS 43% OF ELIGIBLE
MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES NOT
RECEIVING LOW-INCOME PRO-
TECTION

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, complicated administrative procedures, difficult and lengthy application forms and even the reluctance to visit a welfare office are keeping millions of low-income seniors from receiving Medicare benefits designed just for people like them, according to a new report from the General Accounting Office.

The GAP report I requested with Representative PETE STARK found that 43 percent of the elderly poor are not enrolled in Medicare's programs to assist them with their health-care costs. The federal agency said of the 5.1 million elderly who qualify for the assistance, about 2.2 million were not enrolled.

My view is that GAO's findings that the high percentage of Medicare beneficiaries who are eligible, but not actually enrolled in the programs is alarming, and warrants Congressional action.

These are people in our society who need help the most. Often they are women, single, living alone, and over 80 years old. We need to adequately take care of our mothers, grandmothers and aunts, rather than force them to endure a gauntlet of administrative forms and long lines at the welfare agency.

The GAO report cited a lack of outreach to get people into the program, complex administrative rules, and the reluctance of some seniors to visit a welfare office as part of the reason for lack of enrollment.

To correct these problems, Representatives STARK and BERRY and I today introduced legislation to automatically enroll eligible beneficiaries into the programs.

It's clear that Congress has failed to ensure that we reach out to Medicare beneficiaries el-

igible for these programs. Section 154 of the Social Security Amendments of 1994 (P.L. 103-432) directed the Secretary of HHS to obtain all information necessary from newly-eligible Medicare beneficiaries to determine their eligibility for these programs and to transmit this information to individual states.

Medicare provides health insurance coverage to nearly 39 million Americans. Costs are shared by the government and the individuals. Medicare Part A—hospitalization—is paid through the federal payroll tax. But premiums for Medicare Part B—for doctor's bills—are paid by beneficiaries through a deduction from their Social Security payments. Many seniors also buy so-called Medigap policies to take care of costs not paid by Medicare.

The cost of Medicare Part B premiums, which are \$45.50 per month this year, can be a burden for low-income elderly.

The poorest of the elderly can get help paying their premiums through Medicaid. But many seniors who are not quite at the poverty level still have trouble paying this cost. So Congress established two programs, the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program, or QMB, and the Specified Low Income Medicare Beneficiary program, (SLMB).

QMB began in 1986 and is aimed at Medicare beneficiaries below the federal poverty level. It pays Medicare premiums, deductibles and coinsurance.

SLMB, started in 1993, requires state Medicaid programs to pay Part B premiums, but not deductibles or coinsurance. It is aimed at those with incomes below 120 percent of the federal poverty level.

We introduced our bill to ensure that qualified and needy seniors can take advantage of these programs. Essentially, what their bill would do is automatically enroll qualifying seniors in the programs.

The GAO report also stated that many potential recipients don't even know the programs exist.

The report noted, "The persistence of relatively low enrollment in the QMB and SLMB programs suggests that enhanced outreach or simplified enrollment processes would be helpful in reaching a larger share of eligible low-income Medicare beneficiaries."

Our legislation would go a step further and ensure that Medicare beneficiaries actually receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

IT IS TIME TO SERVE OUR
VETERANS

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise in support of legislation I introduced on March 25, 1999, that will give more veterans the freedom to choose where they receive medical care. Under current law, the VA does not generally treat a non-service connected Medicare-eligible veteran because they have no way to recover the full cost of doing so. With this legislation, a Medicare-enrolled veteran could go to their VA for care and Medicare would reimburse the VA at a fixed rate. This Medicare subvention legislation allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a three year demonstration project at