

Mr. Chairman, at any given time, one-third to one-half of all Americans living with AIDS are either homeless or in imminent danger of losing their homes. These are people who face discrimination, or have lost their jobs due to illness or, most cruelly, must choose between expensive, life-saving medications and other necessities such as shelter.

This is where HOPWA comes in. HOPWA is the only federal housing program that specifically provides cities and states with the resources to address the housing crisis facing people living with AIDS. Among the services HOPWA delivers are rental assistance, help with utility payments, and information on low-income housing opportunities.

It is also a crucial element in the effective treatment of HIV and AIDS. There is a clear link between stable housing and the ability of individuals living with HIV to live long and healthy lives. Some people have responded so well to new therapies that they have been able to go back to work after years on disability. However, these treatments require a stable living environment to be effective. To deny individuals the means to get healthy would be a terrible cruelty.

HOPWA is a locally controlled program that provides communities the flexibility to implement the strategies that best respond to local housing needs. It also supplies a low-cost alternative to acute-care hospital beds, typically paid for with Medicaid dollars, which are often the only available shelter for people living with AIDS. In fact, whereas an acute-care facility would cost, on average, between \$1,085 a day under Medicaid, assistance under HOPWA averages just \$55 to \$110 a day. So, HOPWA is not just compassionate, it is cost-effective. Currently, FY 2000 funds are serving thousands of people in 67 communities and 34 states. This is a well-run, far-reaching and successful program.

But as the success of HOPWA grows, so too does the need for funding. As a result of recent advances in care and treatment, the people currently being housed are living longer and the waiting lists for these programs are growing even longer. HOPWA would require an increase just to keep up with inflation, but on top of these strains on the program, 4 new cities will qualify for funds this year, stretching resources even thinner. The \$18 million we ask for in this amendment, \$10 million less than the President requested, is the bare minimum required if we are to ensure that those currently in the program are not threatened with a cut in service.

As for the offset, let me be clear. This is not an attack on polar research. I am a very strong supporter of scientific research and I am disappointed that more money was not provided for it throughout the bill. However, under the budget rules, we must find an offset and a slight cut to the Polar and Antarctic research program, which receives a significant increase in this bill over last year, will do minimal harm to our research programs while providing very significant benefits to the HOPWA program and the people it serves. I would also add that there are eleven other agencies that supplement the work of NSF in the arctic, spending roughly \$150 million a year, so this slight decrease will not damage our long-term research goals.

Unfortunately, under these budget rules we are forced to pit one program against another. If we were not locked into the unrealistic caps

placed on us by the Budget Resolution, I would advocate a large increase in both HOPWA and polar research. However, this is the hand we have been dealt and we must select our priorities.

The housing crisis facing people living with HIV/AIDS exacts an enormous toll on individuals, their families, and communities across the country. HOPWA dollars help lessen this toll. Without proper funding for HOPWA, people with HIV and AIDS will continue to die prematurely in hospital rooms, shelters, and on the streets of our cities. I urge the adoption of this amendment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2000

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of The National and Community Service Amendments Act of 2000, of which I am a proud original co-sponsor, was introduced last week in the House by two of my distinguished colleagues, Mr. SHAYS of Connecticut and Mr. ANDREWS of New Jersey. The bill would reauthorize the Corporation for National Service and the programs it administers: the National Senior Service Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. The bill has been drafted in close consultation with more than 200 community service groups.

This legislation is a simple extension of the existing program with a few improvements:

Codifies the cost-cutting agreement reached with Senator GRASSLEY in 1996. The Corporation for National Service has lowered its cost per-member to \$15,000 for FY 99, including a \$4,725 education award to finance college or repay student loans; and a mere \$7,421 for a living allowance.

Expands the cost-cutting "Education Award Only" model, where the Corporation provides only the education award, and the sponsoring organization provides all other support.

Eliminates controversial AmeriCorps grants to other federal agencies.

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, engages more than 40,000 Americans in intensive, results-driven service each year. AmeriCorps members are tackling critical problems like illiteracy, crime and poverty. They have taught, tutored or mentored more than 2.6 million children, served 564,000 at-risk youth in after-school programs, operated 40,500 safety patrols, rehabilitated 25,179 homes, aided more than 2.4 million homeless individuals, and immunized 419,000 people.

In Connecticut, more than 1,200 residents have served their communities through AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps helps solve critical problems in an effective way. It creates \$1.66 worth of benefits for each \$1.00 spent. And for every full-time AmeriCorps member, 12 regular and occasional unpaid volunteers are recruited and mobilized. AmeriCorps is, indeed, effectively preparing young people for the future and strengthening local communities.

Furthermore, AmeriCorps also funds a great number of important projects that foster involvement and learning in technology by chil-

dren and adults. One of these is Project FIRST (Fostering Instructional Reform through Service and Technology Initiatives), whose role it is to increase access to technology and its educational benefits in the nation's least-served schools. Another way AmeriCorps is involved with technology is through TechCorps, a national non-profit organization that is driven and staffed primarily with technologically proficient volunteers.

I believe these programs are important, because even though American technology is propelling the nation's economy to unprecedented heights, growing concern remains for those who are not benefiting from this prosperity. For those left behind by the advancing technology, the divide growing between the "haves" and "have-nots" is increasing at an alarming rate, as demonstrated by the Department of Commerce in its July 1999 report, "Falling through the Net."

These AmeriCorps programs bring technology to underserved populations and address weaknesses in our economy, such as unequal access to technology, teacher training, and evaluation.

However, I do not believe AmeriCorps is essential just because it can help close the "digital divide." It is essential because it exposes young people to the ideal of serving their community and their nation. Collin Powell has succinctly captured this idea of community service by stating, "For some of our young people, preserving our democratic way of life means shouldering a rifle or climbing into a cockpit or weighing anchor and setting out to sea. For others, it means helping a child to read or helping that child to secure needed vaccinations or it means building a park or helping bring peace to a troubled neighborhood or helping communities recover from natural disasters or reclaiming the environment."

Harris Wofford, former United States Senator and now head of the Corporation for National Service, echoes Powell's thoughts, "Our country needs more . . . patriotism. AmeriCorps encourages and inspires this patriotism on the home front."

Finally, a quote by Vaclav Havel, I believe, explains the need to have an AmeriCorps, "The dormant goodwill in people needs to be stirred. People need to hear that it makes sense to behave decently or to help others, to place common interest above their own, to respect the elementary rules of human coexistence. Goodwill longs to be recognized and cultivated."

This, I believe, is the essential value of national service, and by extension, of AmeriCorps. Serving is as important and rewarding as being served. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and hope that the House Leadership allows us to act quickly on this critical legislation.

**HONORING MICHAEL JOSEPH
BOWLER OF CALIFORNIA**

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, today I call attention to the extraordinary work of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America and to an exceptional individual from my state of California—Mr. Michael Joseph Bowler, winner of

the 2000 Caring Hands Gold Award as the National Big Brother of the year.

Mike has served our community and the Catholic Big Brothers for more than 17 years—providing leadership and mentoring services to dozens of youths in the greater Los Angeles area.

Mike is dedicated to community service. He is a high school teacher and full time volunteer at a variety of youth centers and detention facilities. His accessibility, guidance, and commitment have helped many at risk young people see that others do in fact care.

Mike has accomplished much in his career as a Big Brother. He did so despite being born with a severe hearing impairment which resulted in a childhood full of loneliness.

He is a great example for all of us—representing the best in overcoming personal challenges and in giving to others.

Please join me in recognizing America's Big Brother of the year Michael Joseph Bowler.

PUERTO RICO AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, today I speak about an important development that I strongly support to enable Puerto Rico to have the chance to choose their future status through a fully democratic process.

As we all know, Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States in 1898 as a consequence of the Spanish-American War. Since then, the Federal Government has never formally consulted the disenfranchised American citizens of Puerto Rico on the Island's political status. Over a hundred years have passed and Puerto Rico's permanent status has yet to be determined. In addition, the American citizens residing in Puerto Rico have no vote in the government that determines their national laws.

While almost all other American citizens are given a democratic means of expressing themselves through two Senators and representation in the House of Representatives, the American citizens residing in Puerto Rico lack voting congressional representation, and their voices are essentially left unheard.

Three local inconclusive referenda (1967, 1993 and 1998) have been held in Puerto Rico with regard to the Island's political status. However, the major flaw of these local processes was that local political parties were allowed to submit their own political status definitions, a situation not consistent with Federal law.

Mr. Speaker, one thing we did learn from the 1998 local referenda held in Puerto Rico was that over fifty percent of voters cast their ballot for an option that read "none of the above." This had the effect of providing, at best, an ambiguous result and no clear basis upon which to continue the process of ensuring that the governing arrangement enjoys consensus. But more tellingly, and more importantly, the vast majority of the voters, over 95 percent, did not support the status quo.

Much of Puerto Rico's status debate concerns what the Federal Government would implement. To that end, President Clinton invited the leaders of Puerto Rico's three major political parties, the Governor, our Colleague CARLOS ROMERO-BARCELO, and the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House Resources Committee and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to an unprecedented summit at the White House on Wednesday, June 28, 2000.

The purpose of this summit is to further the work of the federal Executive and Legislative branches of government to begin a process. This process would clarify the options available regarding the governing arrangement that should apply to Puerto Rico, consistent with the Constitution and International law. This process will also define how federal economic and social policies should apply to the Island.

President Clinton has specified that he has no status preference, but that he is committed to agreeing on a process that will enable the American citizens of Puerto Rico to make an informed judgement.

Fellow Colleagues, the Congress has been committed to the Self-Determination process in Puerto Rico, as well as to providing a constructive response to the 1998 referenda held on the territory. We can all agree that the bipartisan nature of the White House meeting will provide a foundation upon which to consider a process to resolve fundamental questions regarding Puerto Rico's relationship with the Federal Government.

If it is appropriate for the President to help resolve disputes in the Middle East, Bosnia and Northern Ireland, is it not in the interest of our Nation to focus our efforts on the future of a territory of the United States and the four million Hispanic Americans that reside there?

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to support our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico in order to enable them to choose a viable option. I urge you to support this effort and the decisions that may result from this summit.

CONGRATULATIONS TO C.W. "CHUCK" PLUNKETT FOR HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE CITY OF LEBANON, MO, AND TO FORT LEONARD WOOD, MO

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this means to honor Mr. Chuck Plunkett of Lebanon, MO, for his outstanding service to his community.

Mr. Plunkett has served the Lebanon community as the president of both the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Leonard Wood Committee of the Chamber. He has indeed been a community leader and an ambassador to Fort Leonard Wood. In fact, Chuck has spent nearly twenty years of his life working on behalf of better community relations between Lebanon and Fort Wood.

Throughout the years, Chuck, along with his wife Lil, have worked tirelessly on behalf of service members and their families who live

and work at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. They have organized tours of Lebanon and the surrounding area to showcase the people of Missouri and the scenic Ozark hills that surround the fort. They have regularly attended events at Fort Leonard Wood and passed out hundreds of buttons declaring "Lebanon Loves Fort Wood." In addition, when the U.S. Army was considering moving the Army Engineer School to Fort Leonard Wood, Lil and Chuck played an instrumental role in promoting the outstanding community relations that America's young soldiers would experience in Missouri. This good will gesture was important to the Army's decision to move the school to Missouri in 1989.

Chuck Plunkett has received many awards because of his dedication to Fort Leonard Wood. He has been given a certificate of appreciation while serving as the Chairman of the Fort Leonard Wood Committee, and he received the TRADOC Certificate of Appreciation for International Student Support. Additionally, Chuck and his wife, Lil, have been awarded a certificate of appreciation for their generous contribution and support to the soldiers of the 10th Infantry Regiment during the 1990 holiday season, and in 1991, Chuck was presented an award commending his public service during the gulf war. One accolade that Mr. Plunkett is especially proud of is from the families of the 55th Engineer Company, which included photographs of service members' families.

In addition to the various awards presented to Chuck Plunkett over the years, he has been named a Charter Member of the Engineer Regimental Association of the United States Army. He has also been officially designated as a member of the Army Engineer Association.

Chuck, who served his nation in the U.S. Air Force from 1943 to 1946 as a ball turret gunner on a B-17, came to the Lebanon community in 1972. He owned and operated Commercial Quality Feed Center, Inc., until 1983 where he engineered and constructed a feed mill and retail store.

Mr. Speaker, in a time when the gap between civilian America and military America is growing, Chuck Plunkett has worked long and hard to bridge that gap. A World War II veteran, a small business owner, and a community leader, it is right that the Members of the House of Representatives join me in honoring this role model for all Americans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber on Monday, June 26, when rollcall votes 322 through 330 were taken. I want the RECORD to show that had I been present in this Chamber at the time these votes were cast, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 322, "yes" on rollcall vote 323, "no" on rollcall vote 324, "yes" on rollcall vote 325, "no" on rollcall vote 326, "yes" on rollcall vote 327, "yes" on rollcall vote 328, "yes" on rollcall vote 329 and "yes" on rollcall vote 330.