

Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property, Representative Berman, I rise to introduce a bill to make permanent the authority to redact financial disclosure statements of judicial employees and judicial officers.

Under the Ethics in Government Act, judges and other high-level judicial branch officials must file annual financial disclosure reports. However, due to the nature of the judicial function and the increased security risks it entails, section 7 of the "Identity Theft and Assumption Deterrence Act of 1998" allows the Judicial Conference to redact statutorily required information in a financial disclosure report where the release of the information could endanger the filer or his or her family. This provision will sunset on December 31, 2001, in the absence of further legislative action.

The Judicial Conference Committee on Financial Disclosure recently submitted a report on section 7. The Committee monitors the release of financial disclosure reports to ensure compliance with the statute, reviews redaction requests, and approves or disapproves any request for the redaction of statutorily mandated information where the release of the information could endanger a filer. In 2000, the Committee noted that: (1) 13 financial disclosure reports were wholly redacted because the judge was under a specific, active security threat; (2) 140 judges' reports were partially redacted (59 of which were based on specific threats; the other 81 due to general threats and the potential risk of disclosure of a family member's unsecured workplace or a residence of a judge or a judge's family); and (3) a total of 218 financial disclosure reports, which includes reports from previous years, were partially redacted.

The purpose of the annual financial disclosure reports required by the Ethics in Government Act is to increase public confidence in government officials and better enable the public to judge the performance of those officials. However, federal judges should be allowed to redact certain information from financial disclosures when they or a family member is threatened. Importantly, the practice has never interfered with the release of critical information to the public.

This bill will eliminate the sunset in section 7 and permit the Judicial Conference to permanently redact information in financial disclosure reports where the information could endanger the filer or his or her family. This is a good bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it when it is brought to the House Floor for consideration.

REMARKS HONORING FORMER
DALLAS COWBOYS QUARTER-
BACK TROY AIKMAN

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2001

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend NFL quarterback Troy Aikman on his very successful football career, and extend my gratitude for his steadfast dedication to improving the lives of children. Mr. Aikman has more than equaled his professional career with his personal involvement in the community. His character both on and off the field has been a tremendous asset to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Troy Aikman was born in West Covina, California. His family moved to Henryetta, Oklahoma where he graduated from Henryetta High School. Aikman went on to play college football at the University of Oklahoma and the University of California, Los Angeles. He quickly became a star. Upon Mr. Aikman's graduation, he was the third highest rated quarterback in NCAA history. He also won the highest award for college quarterbacks, the Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award.

When Mr. Aikman was drafted in the first round by the Cowboys, he quickly became the leader of the team and an integral part of the Dallas-Fort Worth community. During his 12 seasons with the Cowboys, Mr. Aikman led them to three Super Bowl Championships and played in six Pro Bowls. He was named Super Bowl XXVII Most Valuable Player for his performance in the Cowboy's first Super Bowl of the 1990's. Mr. Aikman is also the Cowboy's all-time leader in passing yards, touchdown passes, completion percentage, pass attempts and completions. The Cowboys will surely miss his talent and leadership.

Mr. Aikman has devoted himself to helping critically ill children. In 1992, he established The Troy Aikman Foundation to provide financial support for the physical, psychological, social, and educational needs of critically ill children whose needs are not being met by any other viable resource. Through the Foundation, Mr. Aikman created "Aikman's End Zones" for children's hospitals. "Aikman's End Zones" are interactive playrooms and theaters designed to give critically ill children a place of refuge during their stays in the hospital. Depending on the space available, the facility includes an 8-foot-tall replica of Troy's helmet, a 1,100 gallon saltwater aquarium, a theater, and an interactive computer network. Mr. Aikman established End Zones at The Children's Hospital of Dallas, Texas and at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas. His ultimate goal is to have Aikman's End Zones in every NFL city.

Mr. Aikman has also teamed up with the Starbright Foundation, founded by Stephen Spielberg and General H. Norman Schwarzkopf. The Starbright Foundation's mission is to improve the lives of critically ill children through technology and entertainment. Starbright provides the interactive computer network in "Aikman's End Zones."

In addition to his foundation activities, Mr. Aikman has served on the board of Stars for Children and has been honorary chairman for numerous charitable fundraisers throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Mr. Aikman sponsors a scholarship at Henryetta High School for students who want to attend college but can't afford it, and has also established a permanently endowed scholarship at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1994, Aikman was honored for his community service when he received the Byron "Whizzer" White Humanitarian Award.

Mr. Aikman has also become a children's book author. In 1995 he published his first book titled Things Change. The message of the book is how to use change to one's advantage and view difficult times as learning experiences rather than as setbacks. In 1998, he published a second book called Aikman: Mind, Body & Soul which is his autobiography.

Troy Aikman continues to give unselfishly to our community, and we are grateful for the work he has done. He is the perfect example

of what a terrific role model professional athletes can be if they use the fame and wealth they have been blessed with in a positive way.

Mr. Speaker, I want to once again congratulate Troy Aikman on a wonderful football career and thank him for his unwavering dedication to improving the lives of children.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT FIRST CLASS DEBORAH L. THORN

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2001

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate Sergeant First Class Deborah Thorn, of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, who was recently named as the 2001 Army Drill Sergeant of the Year. SFC Thorn was chosen out of 2400 drill sergeants across the active Army. The Army's drill sergeants are responsible for all initial entry training for the Army's 120,000 new recruits annually.

SFC Thorn enlisted in the Army on her birthday, 3 September 1993 and has served in Fort Huachuca, Arizona and Germany before moving to Fort Leonard Wood to become a drill sergeant. She has served as a drill sergeant for the last 25 months in Alpha Company, 795th MP Battalion, 14th MP Brigade. She will attend the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course in July. Following her completion of the course, she will then serve a year at Training and Doctrine Command headquarters as an advisor to the commander on drill sergeant and basic training matters.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Members of this body will join me in congratulating SFC Thorn for her outstanding dedication and service to the U.S. Army. She is a tremendous role model for soldiers, not only at Fort Leonard Wood, but across the entire U.S. Army. I join her husband Lee and daughter Samantha in wishing SFC Thorn all the best in the days ahead.

VASSAR POLICE CHIEF JOHN HORWATH: A BADGE OF HONOR

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2001

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Vassar Police Chief John Horwath as he prepares to close the book on a long and venerable career serving and protecting the citizens of Vassar, Michigan. John's faithfulness and dedication in his work has made him an invaluable part of law enforcement in his community and throughout the state during his 36 years on the job, the past 32 years of which he served as Police Chief.

As Chief, John has made great strides in making and keeping Vassar a safe and enviable place to call home. Just last February, John put himself at great personal risk when he chased and apprehended a bank robbery suspect who had fled by car and later took off on foot. John's valor, talent and dedication to duty have been a hallmark of his tenure. He has helped establish the Vassar Police Department as a top-shelf agency that others

should seek to emulate. Moreover, the impact of his hard work and adherence to excellence have undoubtedly made a profound difference in the lives of countless people throughout his career.

John, however, has never been content to limit his contributions to the workplace. He has been an avid and frequent community activist who has touched the lives of friends, neighbors and strangers for many years. During the Persian Gulf War, John made it his mission to garner homefront support and display patriotism for our overseas troops. He also has often gone the extra mile in helping coordinate safety measures for scores of events in the Vassar area. In addition, John was one of the first to respond to the needs of his neighbors during the 1986 flood that devastated the community and he earned a special commendation for providing relief and support to the victims.

Those employed in law enforcement fully understand the important role family plays in supporting such work. John's wife, Katherine, and four children, RaeAnn, Michael, Matt, and John Thomas, have willingly and generously shared John with the community and everyone is the better for it.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to praise John Horwath's work ethic and steadfast dedication. He has been an outstanding asset to the Vassar Police Department and the entire community. His presence will be sorely missed. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating John for his 36 years of service and in wishing him the best in his retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
"THOMASINA E. JORDAN INDIAN
TRIBES OF VIRGINIA FEDERAL
RECOGNITION ACT"

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2001

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by Representatives. JO ANN DAVIS, RICK BOUCHER, TOM DAVIS, BOBBY SCOTT, and EDWARD SCHROCK in introducing the "Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act."

This legislation will grant federal recognition to six Indian tribes in Virginia: the Chickahominy Tribe, Chickahominy Indian Tribe Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock Tribe, the Monacan Tribe, and the Nansemond Tribe.

As we approach the 400th anniversary of the first permanent European settlement in North America, it seems appropriate that the direct descendants of the native Americans, who met these settlers, should be recognized by the federal government and that we acknowledge these historic tribes and the significance of their heritage. Together, the men and women of these tribes represent a long neglected part of our nation's history.

The Virginia tribes have fought hard to retain their heritage and cultural identity. The legislation we are introducing today describes the history of the tribes and their early treaty rights with the Kings of England and the colonial government. Like much of our early history as a nation, the Virginia tribes were subdued, pushed off their land, and up to the mid 20th Century, denied full rights as U.S. citi-

zens. Despite their devastating losses of land and population, the Virginia Indians successfully overcame the years of racial discrimination that denied them equal opportunities to pursue their education and preserve their cultural identity.

Federal recognition would provide what the government has long denied, legal protections and financial obligations, including certain social services and benefits the federal government provides the 558 recognized tribes. At a time when our nation is trying to remedy past injustices to the Indians, Virginia's Indians are denied these benefits because none are recognized by the federal government. Not one of the 558 tribes recognized by the federal government reside in Virginia.

I know that the gambling issue may be at the forefront of some members' concerns. In response to this concern, we have worked to close any potential legal loopholes in the legislation to ensure that the state could prevent casino-type gaming by the tribes. Having maintained a close relationship with many of the members of these tribes, I believe they are sincere in their claims that gambling is inconsistent with their values. This position is already borne out by the fact that none of the tribes today engage in bingo gambling despite the fact that they have all established nonprofit organizations that are permitted under Virginia law to operate bingo games despite compelling financial needs that revenues from bingo could address.

The real issue for the tribes is one of recognition and the long overdue need for the federal government to affirm their identity as Native Americans. Coupled with this affirmation is an opportunity for the tribes to establish a more equitable relationship with the state and secure federal financial assistance for the tribes' social services, health care and housing needs. Many of their older members face the prospect of retiring without pensions and health benefits that most Americans take for granted.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:
"MEDICARE RURAL AMBULANCE
SERVICE EQUITY ACT OF 2001"

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2001

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, from an urban setting to the furthest reaches of rural America, Americans have come to expect and rely on health care that includes emergency ambulance service. Unfortunately, for many of us, our first exposure to medical care is, all too often, the EMS unit that responds to our call for help. Yet, for millions of Americans living in rural America this cornerstone of medical care is in danger of collapse.

Typically, rural EMS is a small one or two unit service, staffed by volunteers, not affiliated with a major medical facility, that responds to 350 to 500 calls per year within a large radius (37 miles average) who's greatest danger to its existence comes from Medicare.

From the Pacific Northwest to the Florida panhandle to the rural setting of Pennsylvania, an unrealistic and unresponsive Medicare fee

schedule has done more to erode emergency medical service in rural America than any other threat to medical care in this country. Because Medicare fees fail to accurately reflect the rural medical environment, rural EMS is facing grave danger of being put out of business by a fee schedule that fails to recognize the actual costs confronting rural ambulance/EMS service.

Therefore, I am introducing the "Medicare Rural Ambulance Service Equity Act of 2001," to increase by 20 percent the payment under the Medicare program for ambulance services furnished to Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas.

For rural ambulance/EMS, the majority of their revenue (60 to 70 percent) comes via Medicare reimbursements. Unfortunately, existing reimbursement fee schedules do not accurately reflect real-world circumstances confronting rural service. New Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) (previously referred to as HCFA) fee schedules, anticipated to go into effect by early fall, will not adequately correct the problem. Rural ambulance/EMS providers in every State will remain the hardest hit under the new fee schedule due to their low-volume of calls and transfers each year.

Timely and accurate reimbursement schedules for ambulance/EMS services that accurately reflects real-world costs and expenses are critical to the rural providers' ability to continue to operate. Passage of the "Medicare Rural Ambulance Service Equity Act of 2001" will level the playing field for rural emergency medical service.

All too often we are seeing rural EMS providers go out of business—citing financial loss. The primary contributing factor they cite for their loss—an unrealistic and unresponsive Medicare reimbursement fee schedule.

Recently the town council in Avonmore, Pennsylvania voted to close their ambulance/EMS after 27 years. Their reason, they couldn't afford to remain in business. Why, because with nearly 68 percent of their revenues from Medicare reimbursements they couldn't afford any longer to maintain the service for the community—A sad but all too true reality confronting rural medical care in America.

The "Medical Rural Ambulance Service Equity Act of 2001" is not the panacea for the growing shortcomings of health care in American, but its 20 percent increase in reimbursement will stop the hemorrhaging that we are experiencing in rural emergency medical service.

We all have something to lose by not putting a halt to the erosion of rural EMS. Therefore, I call on all Members of Congress to immediately pass this important piece of health legislation.

A TRIBUTE TO SISTER SHARON
BECKER, A HEALTH CARE
COMMUNITY LEADER

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2001

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to congratulate Sister Sharon Becker of St. Mary Medical Center in Apple Valley, California, who has been elected to the