

level. This is more than double the poverty rate among children in smaller families. Nearly three of every five poor children in this country live in families with three or more children.

Recently the General Accounting Office (GAO) determined that 4.3 million eligible households did not claim the EITC in 1999, forgoing \$2.6 billion in credits. The preponderance (about 81 percent) of the \$2.6 billion in unclaimed credits would have gone to households with three or more children. Households with no eligible children would have received most of the remainder. The non-participation rates for these two groups, 37 percent for households with three or more children and 55 percent for childless households (as compared to roughly 95 percent for all other households), are convincing evidence that more needs to be done to expand and simplify the EITC program.

The current structure of the EITC fails to help larger families, with three or more children, since the highest level of credit is given to families with two or more children. Combining these larger families with families having two children ignores the unique needs of large families, which have experienced more difficulty in moving from welfare to work due to increased family expenditures such as child care costs.

Today I am introducing legislation to remedy this problem by creating a new EITC benefit level for families with three or more children. This new level, with a credit percentage of 45 percent, will provide a higher benefit for these families than what they currently receive under the "two or more children" category (which has a 40 percent credit rate).

My bill also will double the credit percentage for workers with no qualifying children from 7.65 percent to 15.3 percent. This change recognizes the fact that there is virtually no safety net for people in this category, who face high federal tax burdens. The 15.3 percent credit percentage is the amount needed to offset the full amount of the payroll tax, including the employer's share. In his paper, "should the EITC for Workers Without children be Abolished, Maintained, or Expanded?" Robert Greenstein, of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, notes that single workers are the only group in the United States who begin to owe federal income tax before their income reaches the poverty line; the federal income tax codes taxes them somewhat more deeply into poverty. Besides offsetting the full amount of the payroll tax (which most economists believe is borne by workers in the form of lower wages), Mr. Greenstein states that expanding the credit might also serve two other beneficial purposes—it might draw more single workers into the labor force and it should raise the incomes of some poor, non-custodial fathers, thereby increasing their ability to pay child support.

In addition, the bill will increase EITC benefits for all family categories by raising the maximum creditable earnings used to calculate the credit. For all eligible individuals with children, this amount for the year 2002 will be \$10,710, the annual wages of a full-time worker earning the minimum wage. Isabel Sawhill and Adam Thomas, of the Brookings Institution, in their paper "A Hand Up for the Bottom Third: toward a New Agenda for Low-Income Working Families," note that those who work full-time at a low wage job do not necessarily qualify for more benefits than do those who work less

than full-time. They suggest that extending the maximum creditable earnings to the level corresponding with a full-time, minimum-wage salary would be in keeping with the EITC program's goal of "making work pay." In other words, workers could be expected to work more hours if the income eligibility range for the EITC were extended or if the credit earned were increased. For childless workers, the maximum creditable earnings will rise to \$6,000, approximately 60 percent of those wages.

Taken together, in 2002, these changes would provide the following maximum EITC amounts: Household with no qualifying children \$918 (an increase of \$542); household with 1 child \$3,641 (an increase of \$1,135); household with 2 children \$4,284 (an increase of \$144); household with 3 or more children \$4,820 (an increase of \$680).

In order to balance program costs, my bill increases the phaseout rates for all categories to allow benefits to phase out at the same income level as is the case under current law.

Finally my bill makes two important changes to the administration of the EITC—it eliminates the investment income disqualification test and it simplifies the rules for an abandoned spouse to qualify for the credit.

At a time when our country is undergoing so much change, we must not forget that our low-income families continue to remain at the margins of our economy and could be the first to suffer the effects of the current economic downturn. Their needs existed before the tragic events of September 11 and probably have only worsened since then.

I believe that the creation of the additional EITC category involving three or more children will benefit approximately 3.2 million households, thereby further reducing poverty among larger families. In addition to helping larger families to make ends meet, this new benefit level will provide these families with funds for upward mobility and asset building capabilities. Even a moderate increase in income will assist these families to improve their circumstances and work toward escaping poverty.

This bill also will benefit the U.S. economy by providing additional incentives for more people, especially low-income women, to join the work force. The economic stimulus function of my bill cannot be overlooked, especially at a time when we are providing inducements for corporations and higher income earners.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities supports this legislation as a "bill that would better reward and encourage work, reduce poverty among the working poor, and simplify the EITC." They further state "This is one of the most worthy initiatives policymakers could pursue."

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort to further enhance the highly successful EITC by supporting this legislation, and, in doing so, by supporting a respectable income level for those Americans who are, and have been, left behind.

A PROCLAMATION IN MEMORY OF
JEREMY W. KIDD

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, Whereas, Jeremy W. Kidd is lovingly remembered by his parents, family and friends;

Whereas, Jeremy made each day of his life full of excitement and goodness;

Whereas, Jeremy always had a smile on his face and brought smiles to the faces of all those he came in contact with; and

Whereas, Jeremy's kindness and consideration to others will always be remembered by all whose lives he touched;

Therefore, I invite my colleagues to join with me and the citizens of Ohio in mourning the loss of Jeremy W. Kidd, yet celebrating his life and his memory.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN N. HOSTETTLER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the House of Representatives on December 5 through December 13, 2001, due to the illness and subsequent death of my dear mother. Although I received the appropriate leave of absence from the House, I would like my constituents in the 8th District of Indiana to know how I would have voted if I were present on Roll Call votes #469 through #498. For the record, I would have voted in the following ways:

Hostettler Vote

Rollcall Nos.: 498 Yea; 497 No; 496 Yea; 495 Yea; 494 Yea; 493 Yea; 492 Yea; 491 Yea; 490 Yea; 489 No; 488 No; 487 Yea; 486 Yea; 485 Yea; 484 Yea; 483 Yea; 482 Yea; 481 No; 480 No; 479 Yea; 478 Yea; 477 Yea; 476 Yea; 475 Yea; 474 Yea; 473 Yea; 472 Yea; 471 No; 470 Yea; 469 Yea.

IN RECOGNITION OF KEN MILLS
AND NIKI STERN OF THE LEX-
INGTON DEMOCRATIC CLUB

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Ken Mills and Niki Stern, leaders of the Lexington Democratic Club in New York City. The Lexington Democratic Club has been such a vibrant part of the community in which I live and represent. It is a pleasure to pay tribute to two of its most illustrious leaders.

After graduating Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude from Princeton University, Ken Mills went on to make his mark in the field of communications. After working for many years in the private sector, including a tenure as Vice-president and Director of Promotion and Communications for The Katz Agency, in 1978

he was appointed Director of Communications for the New York City Office of Economic Development by Mayor Ed Koch. In 1981, he was appointed Director of Public Information for the New York State Banking Department. He was then named Vice-president and Director of Media Relations for The Chase Manhattan Bank. In 1994 he founded Ken Mills Communications which he continues to operate today.

Ken Mills first joined the Lexington Democratic Club during John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign for President. After serving on the Club's Executive Committee he was elected its president. He then went on to become a District Leader, serving in that position until 1978. In 1995 he began another tenure as Lexington Democratic Club President, a position he held until early this year. Ken, who also serves on Manhattan Community Board 8 is not only an effective leader, but one who has earned the respect and admiration of professional and political colleagues. In recognition of his many outstanding achievements, we pay tribute to Ken Mills today.

Niki Stern has long demonstrated a commitment to social and political causes. A long time community activist, she worked extensively on behalf of the Peace Movement in Westchester County, New York in the 1960's. She remained actively involved upon moving to New York City and in 1979 began working as a Community Liaison for Assemblyman Mark Alan Siegel and for New York City Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin. She was also appointed to Community Board 8.

She also joined the Lexington Democratic Club where she was elected to many offices, culminating in her 1993 election as president. Working with Ken Mills, since 1995, as Executive Vice-president, she initiated the Club's annual mid-winter receptions and dinners and many other innovations which helped restore the Lexington Democratic Club to its position as the largest political organization on Manhattan's East Side. They have made the Lexington Democratic Club an invaluable part of the political landscape of New York City.

Mr. Speaker, I salute Ken Mills and Niki Stern and I ask my fellow Members of Congress to join me in recognizing the great contributions of both of these tremendously dedicated community leaders.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone agrees that we now live in troubled times—times of anxiety, of uncertainty, of struggle. But we also live in a time of incomparable national unity. You could look around the country and easily spot superficial signs of unity, such as the plethora of American flags displayed outside homes and businesses or a crowd at a sports game chanting "U-S-A!" but the real truth is that the river of our national spirit runs much deeper than flag-waving could ever show. And in the fight against the evil that now confronts us, the American people are united like never before.

More than a century ago, an English Literature Professor from Wellesley College

named Katharine Lee Bates penned what has become the theme song for this extraordinary unity. On a trip to Colorado, Bates ascended Pike's Peak and basked in the wonder of the "purple mountain majesties" and "spacious skies" she saw. This scene inspired her to write "America the Beautiful."

Returning to Wellesley, Bates sent the four stanzas of "America the Beautiful" to the Congregationalist, where they first appeared in print, appropriately, on July 4th, 1895. The hymn garnered immediate popularity and was initially set to music by Silas G. Pratt.

But the attention Bates' hymn drew prompted her to rewrite it in 1904, making it more simple and direct. After a few more changes over the next several years, the final version, the one so many Americans know today, was finished in 1913 and set to the tune of Samuel A. Ward's "Materna." In true American spirit, Bates gave countless hundreds of free permissions for the use of "America the Beautiful."

Today we turn to Bates' timeless words for comfort and for a reminder of our nation's strength. These words remind us of the heroism of the firefighters and policemen who responded to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; of the soldiers, sailors and flyers fighting the war on terrorism; and of the cavalcade of heroes who have fought over the years for civil rights, voting rights, and workers' rights—those "heroes prov'd/In liberating strife/Who more than self their country loved." They remind us that the "thoroughfare of freedom" we so often take for granted has been blazed by pioneering pilgrims working even up to today. They remind us of the incredible resolve of New York, one of the "alabaster cities" that "gleam/Undimmed by human tears." But most of all, Bates' words remind us of the indomitable American spirit that stretches high and proud, "from sea to shining sea."

Perhaps the most expressive theme of "America the Beautiful" is that we Americans constantly seek to be uplifted—that we invoke divine help to mend our "ev'ry flaw," that we know even our "golden" characteristics can be further refined. That is a sign of far greater strength than simply waving a flag and chanting "U-S-A!"

Mr. Speaker, in a testament to our national unity, I ask unanimous consent that the complete lyrics of "America the Beautiful" be entered into the RECORD.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

(By Katharine Lee Bates)

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
god mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating
strife.
Who more than self the country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine

till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!
O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001" reflects a compromise agreement that the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Veterans' Affairs reached on certain provisions of a number of bills considered by the House and Senate during the 107th Congress, including: H.R. 2792, a bill to make service dogs available to disabled veterans and to make various other improvements in health care benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on October 16, 2001, and passed by the House on October 23, 2001 [hereinafter, "House Bill"]; S. 1188, a bill to enhance the authority of the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to recruit and retain qualified nurses for the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes, reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on October 10, 2001, as proposed to be amended by a manager's amendment [hereinafter, "Senate Bill"]; S. 1576, a bill to amend section 1710 of title 38, United States Code, to extend the eligibility for health care of veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War; and, S. 1598, a bill to amend section 1706 of title 38, United States Code, to enhance the management of the provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs of specialized treatment and rehabilitation for disabled veterans, and for other purposes, introduced on October 21, 2001.

The House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs have prepared the following explanation of the compromise bill, H.R. 3447 (hereinafter referred to as the "Compromise Agreement"). Differences between the provisions contained in the Compromise Agreement and the related provisions in the bills listed above are noted in this document, except for clerical corrections and conforming changes made necessary by the Compromise Agreement, and minor drafting, technical, and clarifying changes.

TITLE I—ENHANCEMENT OF NURSE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AUTHORITIES

Subtitle A—Nurse Recruitment Authorities
Current Law

Several VA programs under existing law are designed to aid the Department in recruiting qualified health care professionals in fields where scarcity and high demand produce competition with the private sector.