

and I might take immediately that could help our veterans. The legislation that I am introducing today is part of the answer. This bill, which I am pleased is cosponsored by my friend and the Ranking Member of the Committee, Lane Evans of Illinois, Mr. JERRY MORAN of Kansas, our new Chairman of the Health Subcommittee, as well as the Subcommittee's Ranking Member, Mr. BOB FILNER of California, as well as other members of the Veteran's Affairs Committee, sets up a temporary, 2-year program of delegated authorizations of smaller construction projects (each limited to a cost of less than \$25 million) that would update, improve and restore VA health care facilities in a defined number of sites each of these years. The Secretary would be given this power to approve individual facility projects, generally based on recommendations of an independent capital investments board and on criteria detailed in our bill that place a premium on projects to protect patient safety and privacy, improve seismic protection, provide barrier-free accommodation, and improve VA patient care facilities in several specialized areas of concern, such as privacy needs for women veterans, in order to meet the contemporary standard of care for our veterans.

The bill would require the Secretary, at the end of the process, to report his actions to the VA Committee and to the Appropriations Committee as well. The bill also would mandate a review of this delegated-project approach by the General Accounting Office, to ensure this is an effective mechanism to advance some VA medical construction during the pendency of CARES.

Mr. Speaker, our bill would authorize appropriations of \$250 million in fiscal year 2002, and \$300 million in fiscal year 2003, to accomplish these projects under the authority provided. Thus, I believe we can make the case for this interim approach and gain support for moving a specific list of relatively small but critical projects forward with independent review. I believe we soon can be doing something urgently needed for veterans, in the best traditions of our continuing commitment to them. Then we can await the development and conclusion of the CARES process, more comfortable in the knowledge that at least for many VA hospitals, their emergency maintenance needs for small-scale construction projects will not go unnoticed, unauthorized—and unfunded.

It should be noted that nothing in this bill prevents the Committee or the Congress from still considering the merits of large-scale, VA major medical facility construction project authorizations in these two fiscal years, should we decide to take such decisions, now or in the future. By its nature, the bill is intended as a stopgap measure to give the VA Secretary limited authority to keep its health care system viable while the CARES process proceeds.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, and I hope that my colleagues will agree with me, that this is a worthy bill. On very short notice, when VA was informally advised about the prospect of this kind of bill being introduced and considered by this House, 25 projects that would be appropriate under its terms were immediately identified. I am certain that there are many more, in all sectors of the VA health care system, that the Secretary will have an opportunity to consider and approve under this authority. Many VA facilities need funds right now for small projects on an emergency basis. In good con-

science, we cannot continue to ignore them. In my judgment, we cannot afford to wait several years before deciding to provide funds when these projects confront the VA system, the veterans, and us today.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill and help enact it as a high priority early this year.

IN HONOR OF JOHN JUSTIN, JR.

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the life of a great Texan, John Justin, Jr. Mr. Justin passed away Monday at his home in Fort Worth, Texas. He was 84 years old. Mr. Justin was a boot maker and civic leader who was a tireless promoter of Fort Worth's western heritage. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Jane, his daughter Mary, son David, and to all of his family at this difficult time in their lives.

Mr. Justin was born in Nocona, Texas on January 17th, 1917 to John and Ruby Justin. He attended high school in Fort Worth but left as a teenager to come to Washington, DC, where he took a job as a messenger and graduated from night high school. He attended Oklahoma A&M and then returned to Texas to attend Texas Christian University. Mr. Justin served as a member of the TCU board of trustees since 1979, and was a longstanding booster. The athletic center at the university is named in his honor.

He started the Justin Barton Belt Company with a partner and produced fashionable belts. The company continued to thrive during Mr. Justin's service in the Merchant Marines during World War II. In 1950, he took the reigns of the family business. Mr. Justin was the third generation to run Justin Industries, the family boot business that he expanded to include Acme Brick. John Justin, Jr. oversaw the introduction of several popular boot styles, and, under his direction, Justin Industries was regularly the boot market leader. Its motto, "The Standard of the West" says it all.

Mr. Justin was very active in the community. He was a member of the Fort Worth City Council from 1959 to 1961 and was mayor from 1961 to 1963. He was longtime chairman of the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo. In the 1980s he led the drive to build the equestrian center at the Will Rogers complex that is now named in his honor. John Justin, Jr.'s most lasting contribution to Fort Worth will undoubtedly be his drive to promote the city's western heritage. There is no question that he will be deeply missed within the Texas civic community.

Again, my heart goes out to Mr. Justin's family and to all those who are grieving his passing. He gave unselfishly to the city he loved so much. John Justin, Jr. was a Texas icon and his contributions to our community will never be forgotten.

SOCIAL SECURITY GUARANTEE ACT

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to protect the Social Security benefits of our senior citizens. With the prospect of Social Security reform looming in the not so distant future, it is important that we assure seniors that their benefits will not be cut to expedite Social Security reform. Seniors have worked too hard for a secure retirement, to see it jeopardized by a short-sighted effort to ensure future Social Security solvency.

Under current law, Americans have no property right to their Social Security benefits. Many Americans have paid Social Security taxes over their working lifetimes and are planning for retirement with the expectation that they will receive these Social Security benefits. However, at any time, Congress could eliminate or reduce these benefits in the name of Social Security reform.

The Social Security Guarantee Act would eliminate concerns over benefit reduction by seeking to give seniors a property right to their retirement benefits. Specifically, it would require the Secretary of the Treasury to issue to each recipient of Social Security retirement benefits a certificate that includes a written guarantee of a fixed monthly benefit, plus a guaranteed annual cost-of-living increase. By doing so, we hope to eliminate the use of senior scare tactics that have doomed Social Security reform prospects in the past.

I believe this is an important first step toward meaningful Social Security reform. We as members of Congress have a duty to our seniors to ensure their retirement security will not be jeopardized. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the overall goal of reforming the Social Security program so that today's workers will have the retirement that they deserve as well.

Please join me in supporting this legislation as the beginning of meaningful discourse on Social Security reform.

HONORING ARCHBISHOP EDWARD M. EGAN

HON. FELIX GRUCCI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. GRUCCI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate the Most Reverend Edward M. Egan, Archbishop of New York upon his elevation to the dignity of Cardinal.

The Most Reverend Edward Egan is only the seventh Archbishop of New York to be named a Cardinal in the last one hundred and twenty five years. He was born on April 2, 1932, in Oak Park, Illinois. Having earned his Bachelor's in Philosophy from Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois, he was sent to Rome to complete his seminary studies at Pontifical North American College in Vatican City. In 1958, he received a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

After ordination in Rome, he returned to the United States where he was assigned to the staff of Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago and the following year was named Secretary and Master of Ceremonies to Cardinal Albert Meyer. He was also named Assistant Chancellor.

From 1960 to 1965, Cardinal Archbishop Egan was Assistant Vice Rector of the North American College in Rome.

In 1972 he was appointed an auditor of the Sacred Roman Rota, which is the ordinary court of appeals for canonical cases appealed to the Vatican, particularly regarding the validity of marriage. He served as a judge of the Tribunal of the Rota from 1973 to 1985.

He was named Auxiliary Bishop of New York on April 4, 1985, and served as Vicar of Education for the New York archdiocese. He was appointed Bishop of Bridgeport on November 8, 1988. Since coming to the Diocese of Bridgeport, Bishop Egan has overseen the regionalization of diocesan elementary schools, established active Hispanic and Haitian Apostolates, founded the Saint John Fisher Seminary Residence for young men considering the priesthood, reorganized diocesan healthcare facilities, and initiated the inner-city Foundation for Charity and Education.

It's most fitting that Cardinal Egan is the successor of the late John Cardinal O'Connor. New York's new Cardinal is well aware of the legacy left by his predecessor and he is well prepared to continue and strengthen that legacy. He too is dedicated to the dignity of all peoples and to caring for those who are most scorned or ignored by society. Cardinal Egan has the wonderful ability to nurture and develop a sense of social justice among his fellow Catholics. As was the case with Cardinal O'Connor, he understands and deeply respects the values inherent in a multi-cultural and multi-religious community. He has a deep and abiding respect for and dedication to education.

As he assumes his leadership role in the great Archdiocese of New York, it is right for us to wish him success in making this great community a more human, more caring and more believing community of Brothers and Sisters.

Colleagues, please join me and all the members of the Archdiocese of New York in congratulating the Most Reverend Edward M. Egan upon his elevation to the dignity of Cardinal.

IN COMMEMORATION OF HELEN STIRLING GILL

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the lifetime achievements of one of Davie, Florida's most active and charitable volunteers. Helen Stirling Gill, daughter of Davie's first mayor Frank Stirling, died Saturday, February 17, 2001, at the age of 78. Mrs. Gill was an active philanthropist for several decades, giving countless hours of service to her community. She will be dearly missed by the city's residents.

Born on July 10, 1922, in Gainesville, Mrs. Gill moved to Davie with her family in 1924,

where her father was elected the town's first mayor. She married William "Billie" Gill in 1945, and the couple settled in Davie where they established their family business, Gill Realty.

Charming and attractive, Mrs. Gill was chosen as a Davie Orange Blossom Queen in the early 1940's. Devoted to the joy which local pageantry brought to her community, Mrs. Gill continued to help with the Orange Blossom festivities throughout her life by organizing Orange Blossom bake sales and events for children. In recognition of Mrs. Gill's contribution to the town of Davie, the Davie Chamber of Commerce dedicated the 64th Orange Blossom Festival Parade held February 24, 2001 to Mrs. Gill.

Mrs. Gill was also a devoted member of the Davie United Methodist Church where she taught Sunday School and played the piano during church services. Always a generous caretaker of her community, she visited the sick and prepared many meals for church community dinners.

In a collaborative effort with her husband and other Davie citizens, Mrs. Gill donated four acres for the creation of the Sheridan House for Girls in Southwest Ranches. The Sheridan House is a group home for girls and young women whose parents are unable to care for them. Mrs. Gill's generous contribution and care for those young women is testament to her kind spirit and love for her community. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Helen Stirling Gill has left a lasting legacy for the people of Davie, Florida. She will be fondly remembered and dearly missed.

CELEBRATING PEACE CORPS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MIKE HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, today I speak in recognition of the dedication and commitment of Peace Corps volunteers for the past four decades. Since its inception on March 1, 1961 the Peace Corps has become a powerful symbol of America's commitment to encouraging progress and developing opportunity across the world.

Today marks the 40th anniversary of the Executive Order signed by president John F. Kennedy that established the Peace Corps. Over 162,000 Americans, including seven current members of Congress, have served as Peace Corps volunteers. They have made significant and lasting contributions in agriculture, health care, science, human rights, and the environment, serving in over 134 nations worldwide. At the same time, they have been enriched by their experience and strengthened the ties of friendship between the people of the United States and the citizens of other nations.

The Peace Corps also serves as a model for countless other programs and continues to foster a spirit of cooperation and volunteerism worldwide. Its volunteers come from all races and all walks of life and embody the core values that we as Americans treasure.

I served in the Peace Corps from 1965 to 1967 in El Salvador. Like many returning volunteers, I have carried the ideals of the Peace

Corps and the concept of public service my entire life—into my own community and into my career in the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker I ask that the Members of Congress honor the men and women of the Peace Corps on the occasion of its 40th anniversary and continue to promote the spirit of service and volunteerism that they embody.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, on February 28, 2001, I was unavoidably detained away from the House floor; as a result I missed two recorded votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted aye on rollcall #17, passage of H.R. 256, legislation that would extend Chapter 12 federal bankruptcy protection for farmers retroactive to July 1, 2000, and through June 1, 2001. I also would have voted aye on rollcall #18, a bill that would designate a U.S. courthouse in Allentown, Pennsylvania, as the "Edwin N. Cahn Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse."

TRIBUTE TO THE ALABAMA GRAND CHAPTER, ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the Alabama Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star on their One Hundredth Birthday. I congratulate them for one hundred extraordinary years of charity and human outreach. I also send my best wishes to the group for their birthday celebration to be held this Saturday, March 3, 2001 at the York Rite Temple in Birmingham.

Internationally, the Alabama Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star is the largest fraternal organization in the world that both men and women can belong. The Order was established in Alabama in 1901 in Montgomery. Thousands of members in the 200 chapters support countless numbers of charities and humanitarian projects such as cancer research and scholarships that enhance and enrich the lives of all of our citizens.

Each member has devoted themselves to their community, their state and their nation providing not only financial assistance but personal time when their community needs them.

This is a special day for the Chapter and for everyone who has benefited from their many, many programs. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives and the people of the 5th district of Alabama, I share my congratulations with the Alabama Grand Chapter for one hundred outstanding years of service and I wish them several hundred more.