

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE
CRITICAL NEED GME PROTEC-
TION ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with several of my Congressional colleagues to introduce "The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act of 2001." This legislation seeks to protect our nation against the growing depletion of health care professionals fully trained to treat costly and deadly illnesses.

Under current law, the Medicare program provides reimbursement to hospitals for the direct costs of graduate medical education training. That reimbursement is designed to cover the direct training costs of residents in their initial residency training period. If a resident decides to proceed with further training in a specialty or subspecialty, however, a hospital's reimbursement is cut to half, 50 percent, for that additional training.

The rationale for this policy is strong. In general, we have an oversupply of specialty physicians in our country and a real need to increase the number of primary care providers. By reducing the reimbursement for specialty training, the Medicare program has promoted needed increases in primary care training rather than specialty positions.

I agree with this policy. However, as is often the case, there are always exceptions to the rule. We do not want to hinder training of particular specialties or subspecialties if there is strong evidence that there is a serious shortage of those particular physicians. That is why I am introducing The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act.

Child and adolescent psychiatry is a clear example of how certain subspecialties face critical professional shortages. The 2001 report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health states that almost one in ten children suffer from mental illnesses severe enough to impair development, yet fewer than one in five get treatment. One huge barrier is the clear dearth of child and adolescent psychiatrists.

Today there are roughly 7000 fully trained child and adolescent psychiatrists in the entire United States with only 300 additional psychiatrists completing specialty training each year. These numbers fall far short of what is needed to meet prevalence rates that identify nearly 15 million children and adolescents in need of mental health treatment. That means that many vulnerable young people will suffer needlessly, unable to access the help they desperately need.

To provide another example of a current subspecialty facing serious professional shortages, we can look at nephrology. Between 1986-1995, the number of patients with End Stage Renal disease, ESRD, more than doubled, with over a quarter of a million people now on dialysis. Yet current data indicate that only 51.8 percent of today's nephrologists will still be in practice in the year 2010.

Most primary care physicians are not trained to treat the complex multi-symptom medical problems typically seen in ESRD and are unfamiliar with specific medications and technology prescribed for such patients. The decreasing supply of nephrologists, coupled with

an expanding population of renal patients, puts the health of our nation at risk.

The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act provides a tool to help combat such shortages of qualified professionals. The bill would simply provide the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the flexibility to continue full funding for a specialty or subspecialty training program if there is evidence that the program has a current shortage, or faces an imminent shortage, or health care professionals to meet the needs of our health care system.

The Secretary would grant this exception only for a limited number of years and would have complete control of the exception process. Programs would present evidence of the shortage and the Secretary could agree or disagree with the analysis. Nothing in this bill would require the Secretary to take any action whatsoever.

The bill also includes protections for budget neutrality. If the Secretary approves a specialty or subspecialty training program for full funding under this bill, the Secretary must adjust direct GME payments to ensure that no additional funds are spent.

Again, The Medical Critical Need GME Protection Act does nothing more than provide limited flexibility to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to ensure that we are training the health care professionals that meet our nation's needs.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation. By giving the Secretary the flexibility to allocate funds to attract and train professionals in certain 'at risk' fields of medicine, we will significantly improve patient care and lower long-term health care costs.

AWARD FOR SOUTH TEXAS
SCHOOLS

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to three schools in South Texas which are beating the odds in today's public education system by harnessing the strength and awareness of the student population.

At a time when our resources are terribly over-burdened, the following South Texas schools are being recognized by the "Set A Good Example" competition sponsored by the Concerned Businessmen of America: Landrum Elementary in San Benito (2nd place nationally), Harlingen High School (2nd place nationally), and Rio Hondo Elementary (top ten honors).

These awards, launched in 1982, recognize schools which have student-oriented programs to influence their peers in a positive way by emphasizing the simple human moral values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, competence and fairness.

The Concerned Businessmen of America is a not-for-profit charitable educational organization which offers successful business strategies and programs to combat social ills and problems that face young people.

At a time when parents and community leaders are watching our young people with new eyes, wondering what is going on inside

their minds and what motivates them, this recognition is concrete proof that the South Texas community is paying attention to our young people.

Educators, counselors, parents, business people, and most importantly, students themselves, are working together to ward off the problems that have plagued other schools and other young people. The winning ingredient here is the active involvement of the students; the best messenger for young people is other young people.

We have enormous challenges before us in education and with regard to the public policy in our public schools. There will never be one single answer to preparing young people to withstand the complex social issues that our children encounter each day. But the best way to prepare our children to deal with the society in which we live is to teach them, from very early on, simple moral guidelines to apply to their lives. The "Set a Good Example" program follows up as encouragement and reinforcement to these lessons.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Landrum Elementary in San Benito, Harlingen High School, and Rio Hondo Elementary for their efforts to be part of a solution, which is the first step to solving the problem. I thank the young people in these schools for leading the way to better grades and healthier attitudes.

HONORING A FALLEN HERO,
FIREFIGHTER SCOTT L. NELSON

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, in July of 1976 a 900 acre wild fire ripped through the Battlement Creek area of Western Colorado. During the blaze, four brave forest service firefighters from different parts of the country were killed while trying to knock out one of the deadliest forest fires in recent memory. On July 21st of 2001, these four men will be honored at the opening of a memorial to be dedicated in their memory. I ask that Congress take a moment to honor these four men for giving their lives in the line of duty.

The four-day blaze which claimed the lives of three hotshot firefighters and one pilot was started by lightning, and took nearly 300 fire fighters to douse the blaze. Twenty-five year old Scott L. Nelson was born in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Scott was a rookie firefighter on the Mormon Hotshots. He completed his basic training during May of 1976. During the summer of 1976, Scott got an assignment with the Mormon Lake Hotshots out of the Coconino National Forest in Arizona.

On the Morning of July 17, 1976, the crew was assigned to build a section of fire line to protect Federal lands belonging to the BLM. The hotshots were working on a section of fire line on the upper east side of the fire. With out warning, the fire took off and overran Scott and two other crewmembers. The fourth member of the crew survived.

Mr. Speaker, four men gave their lives protecting Federal land during the Battlement Creek fire in July of 1976. Scott L. Nelson and his crew will be honored by the citizens of the Battlement Creek area for their courage and

bravery. I would ask that Congress honor them and thank them for their work.

Scott's family should be proud of what he accomplished in his life and what he did for the people of Battlement Creek.

CELEBRATING TAIWAN'S DEMOCRACY ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN'S INAUGURATION

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the one year anniversary of President Chen Shui-bian's inauguration as President of Taiwan. As the first member of the opposition to assume that office, his election was an extremely important milestone in the development of Taiwan's democracy. It's easy to forget that less than 15 years ago Taiwan was still under martial law. The changes we've seen in that short time span are nothing less than remarkable. Taiwan has become a true multiparty democracy that respects human rights and the rule of law. It is a shining example in a region where many countries remain under the control of one man or one party.

Taiwan and the United States share a common commitment to the ideals of democracy and freedom. The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which forms the official basis for friendship and cooperation between the United States and Taiwan, continues to provide a strong foundation for the bond between the people of both countries. That bond is sustained and made stronger each day by the large Taiwanese-American community, which has made innumerable contributions to our nation's social, economic and political life.

As we celebrate the strength of Taiwan's democracy, we must also recognize the many challenges still faced by that country. Despite its many positive contributions to the international community, much work remains to be done to ensure Taiwan's appropriate participation in a variety of international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. In addition, we must do everything possible to ensure that Taiwan's legitimate defense requirements are adequately addressed.

On his first anniversary in office, I wish President Chen Shui-bian every success in meeting these and other challenges. I also want to extend my warmest welcome to President Chen as he visits New York City on his way to Central America.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN ANDERSON CREWS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues here in the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring a very special person, Mr. John Anderson Crews, who serves as a source of inspiration to his family and many friends.

John Anderson Crews of Newark, New Jersey, celebrated his 98th year of life on February 3, 2001. He was honored at a gala hosted by his two daughters, Maria Crews-Minatee and Betty Crews-McNeil. Some 175 family members, guests and friends shared this event at his home congregation, Mount Zion Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey.

Born in Vance County, Henderson, North Carolina, he came to Newark at the age of twenty (20). He married the late Maude E. Epps in 1925 and they raised three children. During World War II Mr. Crews was employed at Wright Aeronautical in Paterson, NJ, as an airplane engine assembler. He retired from the Pennsylvania Railroad after twenty-one years as an assigned laborer.

John Crews has always led a busy life over his ninety-eight years. He is well known as an avid fisherman who taught many people the art of good fishing. For many years he served as the official fileter during the annual Fishing Derby at Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. In addition, John Crews has been the mechanic who generously repaired cars for family and friends.

He stays abreast of current events through his daily routine of reading all sections of the local newspaper. Family and visitors are frequently challenged by his thorough knowledge of family history and what's happening today.

Mr. Crews, the living legend has been a member of Mount Zion Baptist Church since 1923, so it was only fitting that his birthday celebration be held at his church home. He served as church sexton, superintendent of the Baptist Young People's Union and an ordained deacon.

The immediate family of John A. Crews extends through five generations with two children, three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

TRIBUTE TO JEAN RUNYON

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to Jean Runyon, a woman with a remarkable career in public service. To say that Jean has a flair for politics would only begin to skim the surface of the many wonderful contributions that she has made to numerous causes over the years.

Jean first got involved in politics during the 1948 gubernatorial campaign of Adlai Stevenson and has been a devoted social and political activist ever since. The best way to describe Jean's political interests and involvement is exhaustive. Jean's presence is a staple in the Democratic Party. She carries with her enough charisma to charm a crowd as well as the political savvy and dedication needed to fight the good fight.

She has done everything from chairing the 1980 Kennedy Caucus to hosting political leaders at her home. In fact, the only thing that stretches farther than Jean's dedication is her knowledge of the political scene. By just glancing at her impressive list of political involvement, it is easy to see that Jean is a true champion of public service. Jean has been selected as a Delegate to the Democratic National Convention five times in the past 30

years, served as co-chair of the California Affirmative Action Committee in 1976 as well as co-chair of the California Democratic Party Budget and Finance Committee in 1976.

Over the years, Jean has been recognized by a host of organizations for her Herculean efforts. She was named Democratic Woman of the Year in 1975 and Key Woman of the Democratic Woman's Forum in 1960. This year, she is being recognized once more by the esteemed publication Asia Week for her many years of outstanding public service. As a founding member of the First Asian Pacific Caucus in 1976, Jean helped to pave the way for equal and just treatment of Asian Pacific Americans. Time and time again, she has succeeded in ensuring that the interests of the Asian Pacific Community are heard and protected. Jean has truly been a shining light that has inspired scores of youth to get involved in politics. I cannot think of anyone else more deserving of this honor than she.

Jean's public involvement is not exclusive to strictly politics. She is an active member of numerous organizations including the PTA, ACLU, Women for Peace and the League of Women Voters to name a few. Furthermore, programs such as Meals on Wheels and the Women and Children Crisis Shelter would not have achieved the success that they have enjoyed without Jean's instrumental support.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to Jean Runyon. Her continuous leadership is a true testament to public service. If a template of leadership could be made, it would certainly bear the resemblance of my friend Jean Runyon. Her career thus far as a social and political activist is commendable. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in saluting this truly remarkable political activist.

HONORING A FALLEN HERO, SLURRY BOMBER PILOT DONALD A. GOODMAN

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, in July of 1976 a 900 acre wild fire ripped through the Battlement Creek area of Western Colorado. During the blaze, four brave forest service firefighters from different parts of the country were killed while trying to knock out one of the deadliest forest fires in recent memory. On July 21st of 2001, these four men will be honored at the opening of a memorial to be dedicated in their memory. I ask that Congress take a moment to honor these four men for giving their lives in the line of duty.

The four-day blaze which claimed the lives of three hotshot firefighters and one pilot was started by lightning, and took nearly 300 fire fighters to squelch the blaze. Fifty-nine year old Donald A. Goodman was born in Okanagan, Washington and raised in McCall, Idaho. While he was in high school, he learned how to fly from Clare Hartnett. After he turned 23, Donald was drafted into the Army. While in the Army he served in the ski troops 10th Mountain Division, A CO 87th, E CO 87th. Donald saw action in the Aleutians on Kiska and later in Italy. After he was discharged, Donald went to work for Johnson's Flying Service in Missoula, Montana prior to