

Cross of Notre Dame, was flying to Washington D.C. to attend a conference here in Georgetown. Then a teacher in the inner city of Chicago, Brother Paul on that flight met and struck up a conversation with a former member of this body and a former member of my delegation, then-Congressman Gerald Ford.

They shared their flight in the innocence of travelers unaware of their real destination. By the end of the year, Congressman Ford, the politician, had become Vice President Ford and was on his way to becoming President Ford. Brother Nomellini, the teacher and religious brother, would that same year acknowledge his calling to the priesthood. He would in 1973 embark on the path to Holy Orders that would eventually lead him to be leader of the congregation of St. Mary Queen of Peace Church in Kingsford, Michigan.

Because our futures are so uncertain, Mr. Speaker, it's best we entrust our lives to Good Hands, and I'm sure that President Ford as well as Father Nomellini have long acknowledge the Lord's role in helping to shape their lives and destinies. So I rise tonight, Mr. Speaker, to report that a major chapter in the life of Father Nomellini will close on July 1, this coming weekend, when the good pastor marks his 25th anniversary as a priest and goes into retirement.

Despite his years of teaching in Illinois and Ohio, Father Nomellini is a true son of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He is a native of Hancock on Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula and is a graduate of Hancock High School. He attended Hancock's Soumi College—now Finlandia University—before going on to the University of Notre Dame, where he received his bachelor's degree in English and took his vows as a religious brother. He later earned a master's degree in guidance and counseling from Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana, and a master's degree in theology from Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts.

An ordained priest since 1977, Father Nomellini, has served as pastor of the St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Kingsford for nine years. Before that, he served in parishes across the Upper Peninsula, including St. Peter's Cathedral and St. Michael Parish in Marquette, St. Joseph and Nativity parishes in Sault Ste. Marie, St. Mary & St. Joseph Parish in Iron Mountain, St. Joseph Parish in Rudyard, Holy Family Mission in Barbeau, Sacred Heart Parish in Schaffer, St. Michael Parish in Perronville, St. Joseph Mission in Foster City, and St. George Parish in Bark River.

In a recent interview with the Iron Mountain Daily News, Father Nomellini told reporter Linda Lobeck of his great love of teaching, but he spoke with the greatest pride of the many accomplishments and the community commitment of his Kingsford parishioners. From church improvements and expansions to local outreach programs, this parish surely reflects the spirit and love of its priest for the community.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Laurie and I will attend Father Nomellini's 25th Anniversary and Retirement Party on July 1. We will join with parishioners in lamenting his departure from the parish, and we will wish him well on his planned retirement projects, which, he told the Daily News, include "reading, listening to music, traveling and going to musicals and plays." Maybe, he said, he'll exercise that love of English and write a book or play or two. But

we'll wink privately, Mr. Speaker, because we know that we are all travelers, innocent of the knowledge only God holds for our futures, and God may yet have revealed another plan for Father Nomellini. In the past I nominated him to be Chaplain of the U.S. House, and he has attended the National Prayer Breakfast here in Washington, D.C. One thing I know for sure—Father Paul will go where God and his heart command him.

So I ask you and our House colleagues to join me in wishing Father Paul Nomellini our greatest thanks for his life of service as a teacher, a pastor, and a guiding friend, and I ask you to join me in wishing him all the best in his retirement. May God grant him many wonderful years.

H.R. 4560, THE AUCTION REFORM ACT OF 2002

HON. W.J. (BILLY) TAUZIN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, "H.R. 4560 will clarify Congress's position on the 700MHz band width. In lieu of Committee action, the following points should be noted for the record."

Section 6 ensures that the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) policies that are designed to clear channels 52–69 do not result in an increased level of interference to "in core" channels 2–51, by permitting the operation of an analog facility on a channel assigned for digital transmissions was not designed to accommodate analog operations, and in most instances, relocating analog facilities on "in core" digital channels increases interference to surrounding analog and digital stations in both the UHF and VHF band, to the detriment of those station viewers. Indeed, the increased levels of interference has the ability to deprive television viewing households of the signals they depend upon for news, entertainment, and sports programming.

Sub-section 6(a) specifically prohibits the FCC from granting waivers to its spacing requirements (as required by section 73.610 of the Commission's rules (and the table contained therein) (47 CFR 73.610)) and its interference rules (as required by sections 73.622 and 73.623 of such rules (47 CFR 73.622, 73.623)) for stations assigned to channels 52–69, that seek to operate an analog facility on a digitally assigned "in-core" channel (channel 2–51), if such waiver will result in any degradation in or loss of service, or an increased level of interference, to any television household, except as the Commission's rules would otherwise expressly permit, exclusive of any waivers previously granted.

Pursuant to sub-section 6(b), television stations assigned to channels 63, 64, 68 and 69, that are seeking to clear these channels in order to make such frequencies available for public safety purposes by moving their facilities into the core (channels 2–51) will be governed by the FCC's interference rules and policies, including the waiver process. Sub-section 6(b) should not be construed as relieving stations from the obligation to meet the FCC's traditional waiver requirements.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL J. KERSCHNER ON HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding gentleman from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. Mike Kerschner of Tiffin, Ohio, will celebrate a milestone fiftieth birthday on June 29, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, Mike is celebrating this monumental occasion with family and friends, all who have known of his selfless contributions to the local community. Serving the community was not only Mike's duty but also his honor. His efforts to give back to the community have brought him a lifetime of both personal and professional achievement and satisfaction. Mike truly is a valued asset to the City of Tiffin.

Mike has served Tiffin well throughout his years, both professionally and philanthropically. Currently, Mike serves as President & CEO of the Old Fort Banking Company. He also holds a seat on the board of directors of the Seneca Industrial and Economic Development Corporation, Tiffin Area Chamber of Commerce, Fostoria Economic Development Corporation, and the Community Bankers Association of Ohio.

Mike readily gives of his time to numerous charitable causes that include the Saint Francis Foundation, and the local United Way Foundation. He considers it a distinct privilege to serve his community through his involvement with the Tiffin Elks Lodge #94, St. Mary's Finance Committee, and as President of Seneca Area Career Systems.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to Mike Kerschner. Our communities are served well by having such honorable and giving citizens, like Mike, who care about the well being and stability of their communities. We wish him the very best on this special occasion, and wish him many more years of good health and good fortune.

COMMENDING THE INDIANAPOLIS URBAN LEAGUE AND THE LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ACHIEVERS SOCIETY

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to extend heartfelt congratulations to the Indianapolis Urban League and the local chapter of the National Achievers Society.

More than 350 outstanding high school students have been inducted into the Indianapolis Urban League's local chapter of the National Achievers Society (NAS). The first induction was held June 30, 2001. The induction was coordinated by the Indianapolis Urban League, along with Urban Leagues in other cities across the country and was a part of the National Urban League's Campaign for African-American Achievement, a community-based

movement that embodied the values of academic achievement, social development and civic responsibility.

In Indiana, the Indianapolis Urban League was a part of (22) Urban League Affiliates chosen from (115) affiliates across the country to implement the Campaign for African-American Achievement. The League will receive a minimum of \$500,000 over a five-year period to draw attention to and support for the urgent achievement and developmental challenges facing students in Marion County.

Students selected were high school juniors and seniors of color who have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and plan to pursue higher education. The Indianapolis Urban League encouraged youth, parents and all community members to participate in activities that highlighted educational success and achievement, and placed their names on a national registry nominating them for scholarships up to \$10,000.

Today, the Indianapolis Urban League awarded \$222,000 in scholarships to (24) students. The highest number awarded to any Urban League Affiliate in the country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to ensure that the accomplishments of these students from my district are forever memorialized in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of the United States of America. Let all who read these pages know that a very special group of people in Indianapolis, and across the country are "Spreading the Gospel that Achievement Matters."

THE MEDICARE RX DRUG BENEFIT AND DISCOUNT ACT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to introduce the Medicare Rx Drug Benefit and Discount Act with JOHN DINGELL, the Dean of the House and Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. Our Ranking Member on the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, PETE STARK, has had a leadership role in the development of this legislation, as have so many other health care leaders in our caucus.

This legislation makes good on our promise to add affordable, comprehensive prescription drug coverage to Medicare.

The Democratic bill will look, smell, taste, and feel like any other Medicare benefit, because it is a Medicare benefit. Beneficiaries will not have to deal with an HMO or other private insurer.

Under this legislation, every beneficiary will be guaranteed a \$25 monthly premium, \$100 annual deductible, 20% co-insurance and \$2000 out-of-pocket limit, no matter where they live.

We provide additional assistance for low-income beneficiaries. Those with incomes up to 150% of the poverty level (\$13,290 for one person) will pay nothing. Those with incomes between 150–175% (\$13,290–\$15,505 for a single person) of poverty will pay premiums on a sliding scale.

The Medicare Rx Drug Benefit and Discount Act would: Lower prescription drug costs for all Americans, regardless of whether they participate in our plan; give all Medicare bene-

ficiaries the option of a reasonably-priced guaranteed prescription benefit under Medicare; and ensure that senior citizens and people with disabilities receive coverage for the drug their doctor prescribes and not some substitute that an insurance company deems "equivalent."

Unlike the competing Republican legislation, our plan would never force seniors into an HMO or similar private plan in order to get a prescription drug benefit.

Republicans claim they are giving seniors a "Medicare" prescription drug benefit, but their legislation really provides subsidies to insurance plans and HMOs, not to beneficiaries. Republicans claim they are offering beneficiaries a certain level of coverage, but their legislation really leaves virtually all of the important decisions to the private insurance companies.

Under the GOP plan, private insurers will decide which drugs are covered and which are not. If your drug is not on the list, too bad. Millions of seniors will not be able to afford their prescriptions under the GOP plan. Under the GOP plan, private insurers can pick and choose which pharmacies to include in their networks. If your neighborhood pharmacy is not on the preferred list, you are out of luck.

The bottom line is that those who can buy insurance under the GOP plan may find their choice of pharmacies severely limited or that they cannot get coverage for the drugs prescribed by their doctor.

Many HMOs have unfairly limited health care in the past. That's what the Patients' Bill of Rights debate has been about. They've been unreliable partners in Medicare to date; just look at the problems in the Medicare+Choice program. And now the Republicans want to put them in charge of this medication benefit under their "privatization" model.

Republican leaders have never liked Medicare. Former Speaker Gingrich once said Medicare would "wither on the vine because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it." In 1995, DICK ARMEY called Medicare: "a program I would have no part of in a free world."

Their legislation—the so-called Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act—lays the ground work for them to make good on their desire to do away with the program. The Republican prescription drug plan is the first step towards privatizing Medicare.

It forces seniors to deal with private insurance companies instead of having the choice of getting prescriptions through Medicare. It includes a premium support demonstration program that could significantly raise the premiums of beneficiaries who wish to stay in traditional fee-for-service Medicare. And it creates a new agency to oversee the private plans that lacks authority to provide adequate oversight and disadvantages the agency currently responsible for administering Medicare.

In contrast, we base our plan—not on a flawed privatization model—but on the successful Medicare program. We offer a genuine Medicare plan, providing an affordable voluntary drug coverage to all American seniors through Medicare.

Under this legislation, no senior will ever have to choose between putting food on the table or paying the rent and the drugs they need.

This legislation also helps reduce the skyrocketing costs that seniors and other bene-

ficiaries currently pay for prescription drugs by utilizing the collective bargaining power of Medicare's 40 million beneficiaries to guarantee lower drug prices. By closing some loopholes in current law that prevent or delay generic drugs from coming to market, this legislation also reduces drug prices for all Americans.

While our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are engaged in a cynical political exercise designed to bring themselves political cover, ours is serious legislation. It would bring senior citizens Medicare prescription drug coverage.

When President Harry Truman first proposed Medicare in his second term, a wide array of Republican forces were against him saying he could not do it. Truman said: "We may not make it [now], but someday we will." Eventually, Truman and other Medicare advocates succeeded. Harry and Bess Truman became the first Medicare enrollees in 1965.

The Republican leadership may prevent us from passing a true Medicare prescription drug benefit now, but they cannot stop us in the long run because that is what seniors and all Americans have said they really want.

As PETE STARK points out, prescription drug coverage is as essential to seniors' good health in the 21st century as coverage of doctor visits and hospital stays was in the 20th century.

We have also included in this bill provider payment reforms and increases that match or, in some important areas, exceed those in the Republican-crafted Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act.

If you want to see the real difference between Democrats and Republicans, look at prescription drug coverage. While Republicans protect the pharmaceutical industries' profits, the Democrats protect seniors from skyrocketing prescription drug costs. I urge my colleagues to look at the fine print, and to vote for this legislation when the opportunity arises.

INTRODUCTION OF MEDICARE RX BENEFIT AND DISCOUNT ACT

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my Democratic colleagues in introducing a real prescription drug benefit bill.

Unlike the bill introduced by our Republican colleagues, our bill can be simply explained, because it is built on a simple, known, and effective model—Medicare itself.

Just like seniors pay a voluntary premium for Part B medical costs such as doctor visits, our bill provides for a voluntary Part D drug premium of \$25 per month. For that, the Government will pay 80% of drug costs after a \$100 deductible. And no senior will have to pay more than \$2,000 in costs per year.

These are real numbers, not estimates. The benefits and the \$25 monthly premium are specified on page 1 of the bill. Unfortunately, there are no such guarantees in the Republican bill.

On top of that, we will be arming seniors with the most potent protection from soaring drug costs. Forty million seniors banded together under the buying power of Medicare,