

or family has a chronic illness. Universal health care is not a system where health decisions are made by HMO bureaucrats instead of physicians. Furthermore, it is not a system where the patient receives some kind of health insurance coverage through an HMO or a private health insurance plan, but does not have the freedom to choose their physician.

It is my hope that we will achieve universal health care one day by extending, strengthening, and expanding Medicare to all Americans. Medicare has a 2–3 percent administrative overhead, versus the 20–30 percent administrative overhead costs of an HMO or private health insurance plan. The CBO in 1991 reported that we would save \$ 100 billion dollars a year if we established a public health insurance program for all Americans. Many health care economists contend that a tax payer financed national health insurance program would cost the average family of three a total of \$739 dollars a year for all of their health care costs, as opposed to the thousands of dollars needlessly wasted on premiums, co-pays, and high deductibles of a private health insurance plan. If we continue to support the idea that health care must be run like a business, and we continue to worship at the altar of private health insurance, it will be difficult if not impossible to cover the skyrocketing costs of primary care, prescription drugs, mental health services, and long term care through a private health insurance dominated system.

National health insurance would save billions of dollars through reduced emergency room visits, reduced chronic illnesses, and a dramatic reduction in uncompensated care for public hospitals which treat the uninsured after they have developed full blown chronic illnesses. Prevention is the key here. All Americans would have access to affordable primary care, and therefore, illnesses such as hypertension, cancer, heart conditions, pre-natal health conditions, respiratory, or kidney problems would be dramatically reduced due to having access to regularly scheduled check-ups.

Mr. Speaker, every sector of the American public is calling for health care coverage for all. Citizens, business, labor, the faith community, civil rights organizations, community clinics, public hospitals, the media, physicians, state and local officials; all are calling for health care for all. The time has come for Congress to act on the crisis of the uninsured. Let's join the rest of the industrialized West, and ensure that all Americans receive high quality and affordable health care.

I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor House Concurrent Resolution 99. Let's show the American people that we truly care about their health. We can not allow another 18,000 Americans to die next year because they are uninsured.

DEATH OF DHIRUBHAI AMBANI

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2002

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, as the current Co-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian American, I note with great sadness the recent death of Dhirubhai

Ambani, the founder of The Reliance Group, India's largest and most profitable company.

Dhirubhai Ambani began his illustrious business career as a small trader of fabrics in rural Gujarat. Over the next half decade, he transformed his small business into a diverse economic powerhouse which included vibrant businesses in petrochemicals, petroleum, polyesters, telecommunications, securities and cutting edge technologies. Unlike many older Indian businesses, however, Reliance chose a new path on its ascendancy to becoming a Fortune World 500 Company, and Dhirubhai Ambani was the architect of Reliance's success. Dhirubhai Ambani chose not to keep his businesses as a family concern. Instead, he floated equity shares and thereby allowed millions of middle-class Indians to join with him in enjoying Reliance's decades of economic success. Indeed, there are now more than three million investors in India's largest and most widely held company, which is also the largest exporter from India, as well as the largest private sector source of revenue to the Indian government.

Mr. Speaker, Dhirubhai Ambani was a legend in India. He was also a role model for entrepreneurs around the world, as well as having served as a shining example of India's economic potential. I am confident that all of the Members of the India Caucus join with me in expressing our sympathy to the entire Ambani family. In particular, we send our heartfelt condolences to his widow, Kokilaben Ambani, and her two sons, Mukesh and Anil, who have assumed the helm of India's largest economic vessel. Dhirubhai Ambani's legacy is large, but his sons will continue to build on their father's many achievements.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 4687, NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SAFETY TEAM ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 12, 2002

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4687, the National Construction Safety Team Act. And I especially want to recognize my friend from New York, Anthony Weiner for his work on the bill.

As we all know, September 11th changed New York. It changed our world. Since September 11th, brave workers, volunteers, and scientific experts have traveled to Ground Zero in the name of recovery and understanding.

These workers, volunteers, and experts have all pushed themselves and their skills to the ultimate limit to deal with an unusually grave situation. And I commend them all.

In particular, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST, had to deftly work with a myriad of concerned New Yorkers. There are thousands of affected family members who are both grieving and seeking answers. People like John and Kathy Ashton of Woodside, Sally Regenhard of Co-op City, and Arthur Taub of Co-op City. Some, like Mr. Taub, had concerns about the NIST investigation itself.

NIST has worked with constituents who wanted answers—and with constituents who had information.

Even seasoned NIST employees admitted they were covering new ground as no one could ever imagine such an event as 9/11 happening.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, NIST had to try to do its job amidst emergency respondents, police officers, and incomprehensible loss.

In this extraordinarily challenging situation, critical evidence—like beams, steel work, and cables—was being carted off before the NIST team had a chance to even catalogue or identify it.

Given the fact that the scope of this tragedy had never been seen before, it is understandable that the investigation would be less than ideal.

But it is important that we learn from this tragedy.

And there are several lessons to be learned from September 11th. One lesson is the importance of a swift and thorough investigation of a building failure.

NIST's response teams must have access to building debris as soon as it's safe to enter a site.

And they must be able to move and preserve this critical evidence. This bill gives NIST that authority.

Looking toward the future, it is important to do all we can to prevent a building failure of any kind from ever happening. This bill will allow us to obtain information to help prevent building failures.

And it is important for us to swiftly and thoroughly respond to the community when building failures, God forbid, happen. And this bill does that also.

I urge your support of H.R. 4687.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOSE L. LASTRA

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2002

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Jose L. Lastra, a man who has served with distinction in the Social Security Administration in South Florida for 30 years.

Born in Cardenas, Cuba in 1948, Jose Lastra arrived in the United States on September 28th, 1961, speaking no English and carrying with him nothing but a strong work ethic and determination. Graduating from Miami Edison High School in 1966, Jose continued his education, earning a degree in History with a minor in Political Science from Florida Atlantic University, with post-graduate studies at the University of Miami School of Hispanic American Studies and Florida International University's School of Public Administration.

Mr. Lastra entered public service on July 17, 1972, when he was hired for the position of Service Representative in the Miami Beach Social Security Office. This month marks his 30th anniversary with the Social Security Administration. Over the last three decades, Jose has served with distinction in a number of positions in the South Florida Area, including: service, claims and field representative, Hispanic Program Officer, and manager of the Cuban-Haitian Emergency Processing Office and the Riverside Branch Office. In recognition

of his outstanding work, Jose was awarded the Commissioner's Citation in 1980, 1991, and 1992, and the Commissioner's Team Award in 1997.

In 1990, Mr. Lastra was appointed Area Director of South Florida. In this capacity, he oversees thirty-three Social Security field offices with a total staff of 978 employees. The South Florida Area includes more than 2 million Social Security beneficiaries, many of whom reside in my district. As Chairman of the House Social Security Subcommittee, I am especially grateful for all of Mr. Lastra's hard work on behalf of my senior constituents.

Today, I am pleased to recognize a man who has taken full advantage of what America offers. Coming to this country as a young immigrant from Cuba, he studied hard, worked tirelessly and rose from an entry level position to one of leadership in the Social Security Administration. A true sign of his character, Jose is held in the highest regard by those who work with him and for him. Jose L. Lastra's life and achievements represent the dream of opportunity that America so proudly boasts.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF JOHN DURANT OF CUSTOMS

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2002

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to acknowledge the retirement of John Durant, Director of Commercial Rulings for the U.S. Customs Service. Mr. Durant retires after 33 years of federal service, with almost 31 years of that time with Customs. John Durant served in Customs field offices in Boston and Houston, before coming to Headquarters office in Washington DC. John is well known to all members of the international trade community and the trade bar as a preeminent expert on Customs matters and has been instrumental in the effort to modernize Customs' procedures for the benefit of trade and our economy.

Thirty years has seen remarkable changes in how trade has taken on an ever more important role in our country's economic success. Just in the last decade, trade has grown 132 percent, and by 2004, Customs will be processing more than 30 million commercial entries a year. This is up from 12.3 million in 1994 more than double the level of 10 years earlier. John has had the unenviable but critical role in overseeing more than 12,000 commercial rulings that Customs issues each year on such arcane topics as tariff classification, country of origin and marking. He was also the liaison with the trade community for Customs during discussions leading up to the passage and implementation of the Customs Modernization Act of 1993.

For the Congress, however, Mr. Durant will always be known as Customs point man, and sometimes lightning rod, on trade legislation. For the past 14 years, Mr. Durant has been invaluable to the Congress in providing timely and useful technical comments on draft legislation. Much of trade legislation is not exciting or entertaining. It requires people who are professional, dedicated, and very attentive to detail. Mr. Durant is the leader of such men and women at Customs and he does so with a sense of humor. He has been the "man to

see" at Customs for answers on trade matters. His retirement will be sorely felt by Customs, Congress, and the trade community.

I am very grateful for all of his help throughout the years. John is a delightful man to work with. We wish him the best in his retirement and his future endeavors. We hope Mr. Durant will return to the nation's Capital and lend his considerable talents to the private sector.

TRIBUTE TO MR. JOHN WALLACH

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2002

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, today I join the chorus of voices around the world to express my admiration and respect for Mr. John Wallach. On July 10, 2002, John Wallach passed away after a life of passion, hope, and heart. I offer my condolences to the family and friends of this truly great man.

Throughout his life, John Wallach approached all things with heartfelt passion. As an award-winning journalist, peace activist, and friend to so many individuals throughout the world, Mr. Wallach inspired those around him to believe in themselves and achieve their dreams.

I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Wallach through his work as founder of, and force behind, the organization Seeds of Peace. Seeds of Peace promotes understanding and long-term stability by uniting teenagers from areas of regional conflict for a unique mediating program at its neutral site in Otisfield, Maine. It was John Wallach's confidence that hope and progress can succeed that enabled Seeds of Peace to grow from simply an idea into the world leader in conflict resolution for youth. I have personally visited this camp in Maine, and seen first-hand the positive effect it has on the participants. Seeds of Peace has established a network of peace builders, who now serve as an inspirational part of John Wallach's legacy.

Before embarking on a second career as an ambassador of peace and mutual understanding, Mr. Wallach had a distinguished career in journalism and as an author. From 1968 to 1994, he served as diplomatic correspondent, White House correspondent, and foreign editor for the Hearst Newspapers. His articles earned many prizes, including two Overseas Press Club awards, the Edward Weintal Prize and the Edwin Hood Award, the highest honor presented by the National Press Club. In 1979, President Carter presented Mr. Wallach with the Congressional Committee of Correspondents Award for his coverage of the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David summit. As an author, he co-authored with his wife Janet Wallach, three books, *Arafat: In The Eyes of the Beholder*, *Still Small Voices*, and *The New Palestinians*. Mr. Wallach has also written *The Enemy has a Face*.

John Wallach was a man with an enormous heart. Throughout his life he took chances to make progress, and motivated others to follow their hearts. The world is a better place because of John Wallach, and I join many people around the world to commend him and thank him for what he has done.

STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 15, 2002

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, last week in Barcelona, Spain, 15,000 people came together for the 14th International AIDS Conference for "Knowledge and Commitment for Action."

We know that in 2001, there were 5 million new AIDS infections across the globe. Today there are 40 million people living with AIDS worldwide, and there are 14 million AIDS orphans. Currently, in Africa more than 28 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, however, only 30,000 are in treatment.

In comparison, in the United States, nearly 100 percent of the people who need treatment receive it. 99 percent of the African people living with AIDS do not have access to Antiretroviral drugs because they are simply too poor to purchase them.

In Barcelona, thousands came together to call for treatment now, and presented the "Barcelona Declaration," which was also read during the opening session of the Conference. Nelson Mandela and former President Clinton have pledged their assistance to help raise awareness and funding for the UN Global AIDS Trust Fund.

This declaration called for securing donations of \$10 billion dollars per year for global AIDS; Antiretroviral (ARV) treatment for at least two million people with HIV/AIDS in the developing world by 2004; lower, affordable ARV drug prices and universal access to generics in the developing world; and a new global partnership between government and NGOs.

I am urging that Congress and the President in a bi-partisan spirit, bolster UN efforts to combat the AIDS pandemic, provide 2 billion dollars to the United Nations Global Aids Fund, to help pay for the costs of HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs. This Administration has allocated \$200 million dollars to fight global AIDS. I wholeheartedly agree with the activists in Barcelona that \$200 million is not enough to combat "the Plague" of the 21st century.

The United States must put at least \$2 billion into the Global Trust Fund. Dr. Peter Piot, the Director of UNAIDS said that a \$ 10 billion effort will only begin to make a dent in the crisis. It is a falsehood to say that spending money on AIDS in Africa would simply be a waste of money. Critics of the fund incorrectly say that corrupt dictators will take the money and use it to enrich themselves. In Uganda, Thailand and Senegal, for example, strong national leadership partnered with a community-wide response are reducing new HIV infections and AIDS diagnoses and focusing on treatment measures for their people. There are hundreds of AIDS organizations and government officials around the world that are monitoring the progress of the Fund. Please . . . let's give it a chance to work.

I am urging today that my colleagues in Congress, the Bush Administration, the private sector, and the celebrity community begin lobbying the more affluent nations of the European Community and Asia to provide the remaining 8 billion necessary to combat the