

the risk of heart disease decreases by fifty percent. Study after study concludes that moderate-intensity physical activity such as walking can substantially reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. And new and improved pharmaceutical treatments can help people control their blood pressure and lower their cholesterol.

Mr. Speaker, by recognizing February as American Heart Month, we are raising awareness about heart disease, including its symptoms, its treatments, and ways to prevent it. The more Americans know about heart disease, the more likely they will seek treatment when they need it—before a heart attack strikes.

#### AMERICAN HEART MONTH

#### HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, on this day devoted to affairs of the heart I want to remind my colleagues that February is American Heart Month. Right now, over 61 million Americans are suffering from cardiovascular diseases. And by the time I finish this statement, another two Americans will have died from those causes.

This is why I introduced the community Access to Emergency Defibrillation Act with Representative SHIMKUS and the STOP Stroke Act with Representative PICKERING. The Community AED Act would provide funding to localities for them to purchase Automatic External Defibrillators and place them in public buildings, so that emergency care for cardiac arrest is only seconds away. And the STOP Stroke Act will help states develop better stroke treatment programs because immediate treatment can make the difference between nearly total recovery and death.

Both of these bills were passed by the other body recently without objection and I hope that the House can also do so quickly. I urge my colleagues to support these and other efforts to address the scourge of cardiovascular diseases. Let's have a heart! Happy Valentine's Day!

#### STATEMENT REGARDING CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

#### HON. LYNN N. RIVERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for initiatives to prevent cardiovascular disease.

While Valentine's Day gives us the chance to think about the people we love, it also is a good time to focus on the health of our hearts. Unfortunately, the hearts of Americans are a major source of illness, and we can expect 1 million of our citizens to suffer a heart attack this year. Approximately one in five Americans suffers from some form of cardiovascular disease.

Cardiovascular disease is both painful for families affected and costly for society: heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular dis-

eases cost the United States nearly \$330 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity in 2002, more than any other disease. Preventing these diseases could save families from loss and could save public resources by keeping people in the workplace and minimizing medical costs.

I applaud both the work of health care providers and researchers who fight these diseases and the efforts to raise awareness of cardiovascular diseases during American Heart Month. I strongly support initiatives to educate Americans about cardiovascular disease and to encourage healthy lifestyles that will prevent or limit the incidence of these illnesses. We can do no less for the people we love.

#### THE KIDNEY DISEASE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS ACT OF 2002

#### HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today with 15 of my colleagues to introduce the Kidney Disease Educational Benefits Act of 2002. This legislation is designed to improve patient outcomes by providing appropriate education before Medicare eligible kidney patients undergo dialysis.

Each year, approximately 80,000 Americans develop chronic kidney failure, or end stage renal disease (ESRD), and require either regular kidney dialysis treatments or a transplant to survive. Medicare covers dialysis for most Americans and requires that kidney patients receive information on treatment options, but not until the patient is under the care of a dialysis clinic. Studies have shown that earlier access to information about kidney failure and treatment options can reduce complications associated with dialysis and can improve patient outcomes and potentially reduce costs over the long term.

The Kidney Disease Educational Benefits Act provides reimbursement for up to six educational sessions performed by kidney care professionals. These educational sessions will consist of an overview of kidney function and complications that accompany kidney failure; information on hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and transplantation; discussion of payment for dialysis treatment and transplantation; and information regarding vascular access options.

Providing earlier access to educational services by qualified kidney care professionals will help ensure that Medicare eligible kidney patients receive critical information prior to undergoing dialysis or transplantation. This will improve the lives of those suffering from kidney disease. Mr. Speaker, I ask for my colleagues for their consideration and support of the Kidney Disease Educational Benefits Act.

#### RANDY GERBER: A MAN TO CALL IN AN EMERGENCY

#### HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Randy Gerber for his many years of

hard work, initiative and dedication to the advancement of rural emergency medical services in the Thumb of Michigan as Vice President of Mobile Medical Response, Inc., in Tuscola County.

Randy began his career in 1983 as a volunteer ambulance attendant with the Vassar Area Ambulance Service and soon became a licensed emergency medical technician and paramedic. During that time, Randy's superior work in treating the victims of emergencies was recognized on numerous occasions by the Saginaw Valley Medical Control Authority.

While Randy's top-notch skills on the front lines of emergency response earned him high praise, it has been Randy's leadership and innovation in his managerial positions, first as Assistant Director of Vassar Area Ambulance Service and the former Saginaw Mercy Ambulance and later as Regional Director and now Vice President of Mobile Response, Inc., that have cemented his unparalleled reputation in the field. Moreover, Randy's role as a state evaluator and instructor for new emergency medical technicians has further improved rural emergency medical services throughout Michigan.

Throughout his career, Randy has successfully and consistently identified needs and taken fast action to improve emergency services. He was instrumental in upgrading emergency medical services from basic life support units to advance life support units and in putting at least one paramedic and one emergency medical technician on each of the two units in Cass City and Caro. He also led efforts to bring automatic external defibrillators to Tuscola County for use by the fire and police departments, which significantly improved the odds for survival for cardiac arrest patients. Additionally, Randy has been a leader in expanding educational programs on child safety, injury prevention and other vital issues.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing gratitude to Randy and his entire staff at Mobile Medical Response, Inc., for going the extra mile for the residents of Tuscola County. I am confident Randy and his staff will continue to answer the call.

#### THE DATE CERTAIN TAX CODE REPLACEMENT ACT

#### HON. STEVE LARGENT

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, since I have come to Congress, bringing fundamental tax reform has been one of my top priorities. While the tax reform community is free to debate what the best policy solution is, we all must come together and agree that the first step is to scrap the current tax code. In the 105th Congress, I introduced the Tax Code Termination Act to sunset the tax code which was passed in the House. In the 106th Congress, I introduced a similar bill which was again passed, this time by a vote of 229-187. The purpose of the legislation is to spark the debate and force Congress to take reform proposals seriously, and at the very least reauthorize the current tax code. In this Congress, I continued the effort by introducing the Date Certain Tax Code Replacement Act (H.R. 2714). With an Administration in place that is

considering real tax reform, it is more important now than ever that the House pass this bill again to demonstrate consistent support for bringing common sense to our tax system. As I retire from Congress to run for Governor of Oklahoma, it is my hope that this legislation will be passed again, and to that end I am turning over sponsorship of this bill to a long-standing activist for tax reform, Representative JIM DEMINT. I urge all reformers to join with Representative DEMINT in advancing the cause of reform by working to pass this bill.

#### TRIBUTE TO MR. JOHN BRIGANCE

#### HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, after over 61 years of federal service, an icon of an exemplary, dedicated civil service has just retired. Mr. John Brigance, the former Director of Contracting for all of Southwestern Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, known as "Mr. Procurement" for his valued expertise in contracting, was recognized throughout the Corps. Underlining his commitment is the fact that in addition to his 61 years of federal service, he retired with over 5,100 hours of unused sick leave, about two and a half years' worth.

During his career, Mr. Brigance has been called upon to accomplish many significant projects for the Corps of Engineers. A former Chief of Engineers dubbed him "Mr. Procurement" because he said Brigance quite literally wrote the book on contracting. That is a true statement. Between 1982 and 1995, he chaired a Headquarters task force and penned many of the regulations governing Corps contract procurement procedures. He has risen from an under clerk typist in the Corps' Galveston District, when he started on January 6, 1941, to a GS 14 in charge of all contracting for the Southwestern Division. In the late 1970s, he was a guest lecturer on small business contract administration at Syracuse University. In that same time frame, because of his reputation in emergency contracting procedures, he also prepared and taught the first-ever Corps contracting course on emergency management operations. Called to duty on November 27, 1942, Brigance served 3 years with the Army—18 months Stateside in training, and 18 months in the Pacific Theater working with an engineer parts supply outfit.

Mr. Brigance has also been noted as a wonderful coworker and fellow human being. A former colleague called him "a role model for courtesy, civility, and professionalism. He is, quite simply, the most decent man I have met in my career, and a living example of what has made the Corps of Engineers a great organization." Col. Carla Coulson, former Deputy Division Commander, called Brigance's career "a lifetime of selfless service," commended his personal courage and commitment, and acclaimed him as "a dedicated professional with wisdom to spare." Former coworker Hector Vela, retired Division Counsel said, "I've never known John to lie about anything, even his golf game." Vela described Brigance as one who "never speaks bad about anybody" and added, "John made working for the Corps a pleasure." Brigance has been called a "whirlwind" for fast action and

for wearing multiple hats—contracting, small business advisor, inspector general and equal employment opportunity officer. Those people he has mentored have echoed the same sentiments. All speak admiringly of John Brigance.

His life has been well rounded by the many avocations he enjoys—from a love of golf, to annual deer hunts in the Texas hill country, collecting stamps, coins and proof sets, and dancing with his wife of 60 years, Peggy. He shows enthusiasm for each and every activity he pursues, his pronounced activity inspiring others to greater accomplishments.

For his farewell luncheon, his friends and colleagues recognized him with numerous awards and mementos. Among those were the congratulatory letter from President Bush and a presentation by Texas Governor Rick Perry making Brigance an "Admiral of the Texas Navy," an honorary position to recognize his contributions. Perry also named Peggy Brigance a "Yellow Rose of Texas," an honor bestowed only on native Texans.

None of that outdid what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave Brigance after 61 years of service. The Corps' Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting made the first-ever presentation of the highest Corps award for contracting, the A-F-I-R-E, which stands for "Adaptive, Flexible, Innovative, Responsive and Effective/Efficient", to Brigance. Brig. Gen. David F. Melcher, Southwestern Division commander, also hung the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment Silver Order of the de Fleury medal around Brigance's neck. Honoring John as the 35th inductee into Southwest Division Gallery of Distinguished Civilians rounded out the retirement accolades made in recognition of his commitment, leadership and esteem.

Other awards he received throughout his career include the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service award granted by the Secretary of the Army, the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the Assistant Secretary of the Army Coin and others much too numerous to mention.

Mr. John Brigance and his daily contributions to the United States as a loyal, outstanding and dedicated federal civil servant serve as an inspiration to us all.

#### EXEMPLARY HONORS FOR SOUTH TEXAS SCHOOLS

#### HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues the incredible pride in my heart, pride for two schools in my hometown of Robstown, TX, the biggest little town in Texas.

The Solomon P. Ortiz Intermediate School and the San Pedro Elementary School in the Robstown Independent School District were chosen by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as "Exemplary" schools under the State analysis of individual schools in each school district in the state.

Each year, the TEA ranks the state's schools as: low-performing, acceptable, recognized, or exemplary—based on performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS, the test given to students in Texas) and on attendance and dropout rates.

Both the Ortiz Intermediate School and San Pedro Elementary are schools with large Hispanic student populations. Since largely Hispanic schools often have to do more with less money, their challenge is greater to compete on a more difficult playing field.

These two schools have found the secret to success. They know that students cannot just up and pass a difficult test—it takes the whole effort of every person who works at each school. It takes teachers, counselors, cafeteria workers, teacher's aids, and school administrators to make the very most of a child's educational experience.

I want to thank each and every staff member for their vision on helping students on their journey to higher education.

These schools capitalized on every single opportunity, every strength, they had to build a team that helped the children of Robstown find the very best in them. Let's not underestimate the stress associated with the TAAS. There is great pressure on the children, on the schools, on the employees—judgements on the school staff is based on the results young people achieve on TAAS.

Teaching children what they need to know to pass the tests, inspiring them to come to school every day, inspiring them to stay in school when they despair, is a monumental task. So the House of Representatives should know that these schools have achieved a great deal.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending the Ortiz Intermediate School and San Pedro Elementary School of Robstown, TX, for excellence in education.

#### TRIBUTE TO SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

#### HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 14, 2002*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the finest universities in the great State of California as it celebrates its 40th anniversary.

Located in the heart of the Wine Country, Sonoma State University has over 7,500 students and 1,600 faculty and staff members. Originally established in 1956 as a satellite teaching campus of San Francisco State University, SSU became a member of the California State College System in 1961 and attained University status in 1978. The idyllic campus, set at the base of Sonoma Mountain, now offers over 41 baccalaureate and 14 master's degree programs.

The small liberal arts university has made Sonoma County proud many times over the years. It has been home to Mario Savio, a leader of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley and a professor in the Physics Department until he passed on in 1996. For the past 25 years, Project Censored, the yearly publication that covers the top underreported news stories of the year, has brought national acclaim to SSU's Sociology department. Most recently, the unveiling of the Environmental Technology Center brought international praise. "The Building That Teaches" combines state-of-the-art energy efficiency and environmental responsibility and is one of only a few like it in the world.