

continue even after the December 12 decision by the European Union, to accept Cyprus as a member. Mr. Annan stressed "we are going to continue our efforts and try to make progress as quickly as we can. If by the time of the accession the issues have not been resolved, I expect the talks to continue beyond the EU accession". The EU has made it clear for the past three years that a resolution of the Cyprus problem is not a precondition for Cyprus' EU accession and I support that viewpoint.

Cyprus and the United States have a great deal in common. We share a deep and abiding commitment to democracy, human rights, free markets, and the ideal and practice of equal justice under the law.

In fact, Cyprus was among the first nations to express its solidarity with the U.S. immediately following the September 11th terrorist attacks. Cyprus has taken many concrete and active steps to target the perpetrators, collaborators and financiers of terrorism. For example, Cyprus has endorsed and implemented all resolutions and decisions of the U.N. Security Council, the EU and other International Organizations pertaining to the fight against terrorism.

Unfortunately, Cyprus is not without its own difficult history. 37 percent of this nation is still occupied by a hostile foreign power, and it has been for more than 25 years.

On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, and to this day continues to maintain an estimated 35,000 heavily armed troops. Nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots, who fell victim to a policy of ethnic cleansing, were forcibly evicted from their homes and became refugees in their own country.

Every year, on or around July 20, I, along with my dear friend Representative BILIRAKIS, sponsor a Special Order to remember the anniversary of the Turkish invasion in a tradition that has become one of our proudest traditions.

Despite the hardships and trauma caused by the ongoing Turkish occupation, Cyprus has registered remarkable economic growth, and the people living in the Government-controlled areas enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living. Sadly, the people living in the occupied area continue to be mired in poverty.

In the times we are facing, it is clear that divisions among people create harmful, destructive environments. The U.S. has expressed its unwavering support for a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem and I wholeheartedly agree. The relationship between Cyprus and the United States is strong and enduring. We stand together celebrating democracy and freedom, hopeful that a peaceful solution will soon be negotiated and a united Cyprus will join the EU.

**BLACK LUNG CONSOLIDATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES ACT**

**HON. MELISSA A. HART**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to sponsor legislation, on behalf of the Administration, which would consolidate all of the re-

sponsibility for the administration of the Black Lung Benefits Program under a single agency. This proposal was initially outlined in the President's FY 2003 Budget for the Department of Labor.

The Black Lung Benefits Program was enacted as part of the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, the first comprehensive Federal legislation to regulate health and safety conditions in the coal industry. The law created a temporary system to compensate victims of dust exposure in the mines with public funds administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA).

In 1972, the Act was amended to require the use of simplified interim eligibility for all claims filed with SSA and to transfer new claims to the Department of Labor (DOL) in 1973. The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs in DOL assumed responsibility for the processing and paying of new claims on July 1, 1973. Most of the claims filed prior to that date remained within the jurisdiction of SSA until 1997.

On September 26, 1997, officials from SSA and DOL signed a Memorandum of Understanding transferring responsibility for managing all active SSA Black Lung claims to DOL. This change was aimed at eliminating any confusion about which Federal agency handles the claims and enhancing customer service to all Black Lung beneficiaries. At present, DOL manages all Federal black lung claims, while formal appeals on Part B claims are referred to SSA. The Black Lung Consolidation of Administrative Responsibilities Act would simply transfer all of the responsibilities for the administration of claims under Part B of the Act to DOL, while retaining all regulations currently applicable to the beneficiaries' entitlements.

Besides improving administrative efficiency, this transfer of responsibilities will ensure the continuation of a high level of customer service to beneficiaries. Joint audits by the Office of the Inspector General of SSA and DOL have confirmed the high quality of claims-related services being provided by DOL. Last year, the University of Michigan released the results of a customer satisfaction survey of beneficiaries receiving services from DOL and found the highest level of customer satisfaction of any of the Federal benefits programs surveyed.

Finally, the legislation implements a long-standing recommendation by the Inspector General at DOL and SSA that the administrative responsibility for the Black Lung Benefits Act should be consolidated within DOL. This change would ensure the continuation of a high level of service to program beneficiaries, while eliminating confusion and duplication of administrative functions between the two agencies.

The Black Lung Consolidation of Administrative Responsibilities Act is simply common sense and good government. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

**RECOGNIZING AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE**

**HON. TAMMY BALDWIN**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to today to recognize American Family Insurance,

which was founded in Madison, Wisconsin 75 years ago today on October 3, 1927.

American Family Insurance was originally founded as Farmers Mutual by Herman Wittwer. Its mission was to sell auto insurance to low-risk farmers. The first policyholder paid \$15.22 for his annual premium, which was 25 percent less than the going rate. It did not take long for Farmers Mutual to become the fastest growing insurance company in Wisconsin. (As time went by, Farmers Mutual expanded its market and product line and changed its name to American Family Insurance.)

Today, American Family is Madison's largest private employer and largest company as measured by annual revenue. It provides jobs to 3,500 employees in Madison and 7,500 employees across 17 states. American Family Insurance is the tenth largest property/casualty insurance company in nation and the fourth largest mutual insurance company. At the ranking of 337, it is Dane County's only listing on the Fortune 500.

I am proud that through all of American Family's growth and expansion, the company has remained true to its Madison and Wisconsin roots. The company has shown its commitment to the area through its community giving and involvement. American Family donates more than \$1 million annually to groups and organizations that help enhance quality of life and provide opportunities for everyone in our communities.

Congratulations on 75 great years.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. PETER DEUTSCH**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the chamber today during rollcall vote No. 427, No. 428, and No. 429. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote No. 427, "yea" on rollcall vote No. 428 and "nay" on rollcall vote No. 429.

**JOSEPH J. URBAN: PUSHING THE POLKA**

**HON. JAMES A. BARCIA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my very good friend, Joe Urban of Bay City, Michigan, for his induction into the Michigan State Polka Music Hall of Fame and for his many years of cultivating and publicizing polka music in our shared hometown. The polka has long been king in Bay City, especially among the members of our significant Polish and German communities, and Joe Urban has been a polka fan and promoter since he was a boy.

Although Joe never learned to play a musical instrument, he has been beating the proverbial drum on behalf of his fellow polka music enthusiasts for more than 40 years. In 1959, he began promoting polka for festivals at St. Hyacinth Catholic Church and for dances at Pulaski Hall in Bay City. Joe's Polish Circle dinnerdances became legendary in

the 1960s, featuring local bands and musicians such as Stan Drzewicki, Gene Kochaney, Pat Lepeak's Starliners and nearly every other polka band in the region. Later, out-of-town bands joined the line-up as polka music and dancing grew in popularity.

Since then, Joe's tremendous energy and enduring passion for the polka has been instrumental in keeping the music alive and flourishing in Bay City and beyond, particularly at Pulaski Hall. The list of bands that Joe has managed to bring to Bay City is a veritable "Who's Who" of the polka industry, including The Polish Kid, Tony Blazonczyk, Polkamotion Crusade, Lenny Golmulka and The Chicago Push and many others. In fact, Lenny Gemulka's retirement party was held at Pulaski Hall.

Over the years, Joe also has extended his polka promotion efforts throughout the state and across the country. He has attended events produced by the United States Polka Association and the International Polka Association. Of course, Joe's wife, Rita, and daughter, Jeanne, should also be commended for their support of Joe and his keen interest and involvement in anything and everything associated with the polka.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Joe Urban upon the occasion of his induction into the Michigan State Polka Music Hall of Fame. It is an appropriate and well-deserved honor for someone who has made so many contributions to ensure that generations to come will continue to stomp their feet and dance to the energetic beat of the polka well into the future.

EIGHTH AVENUE SENIOR CENTER  
9TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to commemorate the 9th Anniversary Celebration of the Eighth Avenue Senior Center sponsored by the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association in my district.

Founded in 1988, the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association began as a small social services agency dedicated to providing assistance to the Asian American community. Since then, that community has blossomed with over 250,000 residents that form the heart of Brooklyn's Chinatown.

The B.C.A. has expanded with the Eighth Avenue Senior Center, which serves the community with daily meals, bilingual information, English as a Second Language classes, Citizenship classes, medical check-ups, and even field trips. Its membership is 1,800 and serves more than 200 senior citizens each day. Such dedication to this community should be commended.

On October 3, the Senior Center will host its Millennial Roundtable celebration in similar style, by pairing guests with 12 senior members aged 84 and older—a combined age of 1000 years. The Double Millennial Roundtable pairs guests with 23 members aged 87 years or older, for a combined age of 2000 years. This is a great tribute to the age, wisdom and contributions our senior citizens have made, and continue to make, to our community.

GENE AND POCO GERTLER

**HON. BOB STUMP**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the spirit of charity and two very good people in my district.

Gene and Poco Gertler joined us in Prescott just a few years ago, but they have made quite a difference for our community. While they came to enjoy retirement in Arizona, they ended up working harder than they ever imagined—not for themselves, but to improve the lives of other Arizonans.

One day, while cleaning out closets for the winter, they decided to donate their surplus clothes to the citizens of the Hopi reservation 250 miles north of Prescott. And, since there was extra room in the pickup truck, Gene sent an e-mail to 21 neighbors and friends, giving them the opportunity to add their contributions.

Well, instead of the few bags of clothing Gene and Poco expected, neighbors showed up with over 600 pounds of donations—enough that they had to rent a trailer. Many of the donations came from families the Gertlers didn't know, but who had heard about the trip by word of mouth.

Word continued to spread, and the Gertlers' one-time visit to the reservation became a regular shuttle. Furniture and other household items joined the clothes, and soon there was too much for the pickup and trailer. It seemed like every load was bigger than the last. Many people would be overwhelmed, or say, "I've done my part." Gene and Poco bought a bigger truck and a bigger trailer and kept on hauling.

The years bring new challenges to all of us, and sadly, Gene and Poco have found that they are no longer able to carry on their work. But that wasn't until they had rounded up and personally delivered over 25,000 pounds—yes, over twelve tons—of clothing, furniture, and other assistance for Arizona's Native Americans. All for no remuneration other than knowing they'd helped keep other people warm.

The Bible says, "By their works shall ye know them." We sure know about Gene and Poco. And we are proud to call them our neighbors.

HELP EFFICIENT, ACCESSIBLE,  
LOW-COST, TIMELY HEALTH  
CARE ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

**HON. JEFF FLAKE**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 26, 2002*

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, today I voted "no" on final passage of H.R. 4600, the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, and Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act. My vote was a difficult one, but after consulting with both supporters and opponents of the bill, I was not convinced that the federal government should preempt state law in this area.

Those supporting this bill have made some compelling arguments as to why Congress should step in and institute these reforms.

They cite the national nature of insurance plans, whereby a doctor in Arizona might have to pay more for malpractice insurance due to an over-the-top jury award in Texas. They also note that, as doctors close up shop or stop providing high-risk care in specialties such as emergency medicine and obstetrics and gynecology, patients are forced to cross state lines in order to seek out treatment. We have all watched with dismay as hospitals have been forced to shut their doors and doctors have opted to treat patients without malpractice insurance due to the high costs of premiums. Certainly, the trial attorneys who line their pockets with egregious fees aren't suffering as a result of the mess they've made with unscrupulous lawsuits. These arguments only underscore an already evident need for the states to pursue medical malpractice reforms. However, as one who believes firmly in federalism, I am unwilling to support legislation that would, in effect, preempt the constitution of the state of Arizona, which prohibits caps on damages.

The natural evolution of health care delivery suggests that a federal solution such as H.R. 4600 may one day be necessary. Even today, we need tort reform badly. It's up to the states to begin that process, and I plan to be part of those efforts. The states should follow California's example, which has been an undeniable success over the past 25 years.

HONORING THE FEMINIST MAJORITY  
FOUNDATION AND MS. MAG-  
AZINE

**HON. HILDA L. SOLIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 3, 2002*

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a leader in the movement to establish equality for women in the United States—the Feminist Majority Foundation.

Co-founded by Peg Yorkin and Eleanor Smeal, the Feminist Majority Foundation has been instrumental in the fight to create gender equality, eradicate domestic violence and promote feminist women and men as they seek elected office across the country.

Yorkin's involvement with feminist causes can be traced back to 1977, when she was elected as a delegate from California to the National Women's Conference. In 1986, she worked with Eleanor Smeal, then the president of the National Organization for Women to produce NOW's 20th Anniversary show, and in 1987, the two joined to found the Feminist Majority Foundation.

Nineteen ninety-one was a banner year for the Feminist Majority, which received a historic \$10 million gift to ensure a legacy of empowerment for young women. The first endowment made was a drive to make the so-called abortion pill RU-486 available to women.

That year also saw sexual harassment propelled to new heights as Clarence Thomas was vetted for a spot on the U.S. Supreme Court. Testimony by Anita Hill, coupled with the Senate's treatment of her and her allegations of sexual harassment, prompted the Feminist Majority to open the Sexual Harassment Hotline to provide information and help to harassment victims.

The groundbreaking efforts of the Feminist Majority continued, and in 2001 the organization bought a building in Beverly Hills to house