

has dedicated himself to public service, in and out of uniform, and to further the many benefits we enjoy as Americans. His actions consistently reflect a true leader who has served with courage and commitment.

As Doug departs from public service I ask my colleagues to join with me in delivering an appreciative tribute from a grateful State and Nation, along with our best wishes for a rewarding retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO REX ROBLEY

● Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I rise today among my fellow colleagues to honor and pay tribute to Kentucky's last surviving World War I veteran. Of the 84,000 Kentuckians who were sent to fight in World War I, Rex Robley, 91 years young from Louisville, KY, is believed to be the only one still alive. This man has sacrificed and accomplished so much in just one lifetime. He truly exemplifies the American spirit.

Monday, we as a Nation came together to celebrate Veterans Day. On this very important day, every American has the opportunity and the obligation to thank and honor those who so valiantly fought for our freedoms, rights and liberties in the trenches of France, the beaches of Normandy, the jungles of Korea and Vietnam and the deserts of Iraq. These men and women fought so that future generations would be able to live under a blanket of freedom that reaches from coast to coast.

Sadly, thousands of these veterans are dying off in large numbers every year. During the 1990s, the number of World War II veterans in Kentucky decreased by nearly 54,000. The Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs calculates that, on an average day, Kentucky loses 22 military veterans, of whom 17 were in World War II. To ensure that this country continues to build and prosper, we must make a promise to ourselves to never forget the sacrifices these individuals have made. It is their memory that will guide us in the right direction.●

TRIBUTE TO BILL CAPPEL

● Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I rise today to honor Bill Cappel of Covington, KY for his years of dedicated and selfless service to this nation and to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Yesterday, Mr. Cappel celebrated his 90th birthday.

In honor of this event, city officials in Covington presented Mr. Cappel with a key to the city, read a proclamation in his honor and even provided him with a special police escort as they officially named the Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex after him.

Bill Cappel is one of those rare individuals in life who has the innate ability to put a positive spin on every situation. The only thing harder than getting him out in a softball game is getting him to take that permanent smile

off his face. As a soldier in World War II, not only did Bill Cappel earn the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star for his courageous military service, he also organized baseball and softball games for the soldiers while on tours of duty in Africa and Europe as a way for the men to escape the darkness that surrounds war. It is this type of service that has led many to think of Bill Cappel as a saint.

In 1933, Mr. Cappel organized a women's softball league in Covington as way to get more women involved in the sporting world. Nearly 30 years later, he founded the Covington Major Girls League at Meinken Field. Three of the teams from the Covington Major Girls League won national championships. Bill learned that when you treat people like champions, they play and act like champions.

Throughout his life, Bill Cappel has given much to his country and the people of Northern Kentucky. He has always found a way to give back to the local community. In his mind, his actions do not merit any sort of special attention. He is simply trying to do for others what they have done for him. Whether it has been as a soldier, umpire, coach, player or friend, Bill Cappel has managed to make the world around him a better place for people to live. It truly is amazing how the actions of one man could positively affect so many.

I believe we all can take something away from the life Bill Cappel has lived. In politics, we each took an oath to serve the people and uphold the Constitution of the United States of America. While Mr. Cappel never swore an oath, he has demonstrated to thousands of people how far the human spirit can travel.●

RETIREMENT OF DOCTOR IRVING GUTTENBERG

● Mr. DODD. Madam President, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine, Dr. Irving Guttenberg, on the occasion of his retirement.

For 35 years, Dr. Guttenberg has specialized in ear, nose, and throat medicine in Meriden, CT. Over the course of his career, he treated and cured virtually thousands of neighbors in Meriden and surrounding communities, gradually earning the trust and admiration of an entire region.

I had the pleasure of having Dr. Guttenberg's daughter, Lisa Guttenberg Weiss, on my Connecticut staff for many years. Last month, I was deeply touched by an affectionate letter Lisa wrote to the Meriden Record Journal describing her father's dedication to his patients and chosen profession. I would like that letter printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks.

I know that the people of Meriden and central Connecticut will truly miss Dr. Guttenberg. Once again, I commend Dr. Guttenberg on the occasion of his retirement, and I wish him success in all of his future endeavors.

The letter follows:

AN END OF AN ERA FOR DR. GUTTENBERG

It is with a sense of pride and a few tears that I write to mark the end of an era and the retirement of Dr. Irving Guttenberg, my father. With my mother's help, he opened his medical office, now known as Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists, P.C. in 1967 at 219 West Main Street in Meriden. He officially retired September 30.

I imagine he has treated at least half the people in town, not to mention Wallingford and Cheshire. I cannot even guess how many tonsils he has removed or strep throats and sinus infections he has treated. But, I know that he has performed well over 50,000 pressure-equalizing tubes procedures (because he told me so). I also know that he is greatly admired, if not beloved, by his patients. My knowledge comes from the school vacations I spent working in his offices when I would schedule patient appointments, often triple-booking his days because so many patients wanted to see "Dr. G". As a young girl and now as an adult in my late thirties, I have seen Dad's patients' come up to him at the movies, at restaurants, at the grocery store, everywhere to thank him for all his good work and kindness. People still come up to me and tell me how great and dedicated and smart my father is. I know and I agree.

My father has always taken his responsibilities for his patients seriously. Even after he purchased his first pager and cell phone, it seemed like he would not leave the house if he were "on call". Forget about going to the movies. Do not even think about asking him to change his schedule to go away for some occasion. If he was on call, he was staying home, close to the phone and close to the hospital.

When I was growing up, my father left early in the morning and returned home relatively late, often eating dinner well after the rest of the family had finished. During weekends Dad had early morning and late afternoon "rounds" at Meriden's two hospitals. Sometimes he brought my brother and me with him and we would wait for an eternity in the doctor's lounge or near the nurses' station. (We are rumored to have been wheelchair racers, but there is no proof.) Other times, when we awoke Mom told us that Dad went to the hospital in the middle of the night to operate on someone.

Now, after 35 years in practice and after having served as Chief of Surgery and Chief of Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) at WWII Veterans' Memorial Hospital and Chief of ENT at MidState Medical Center and as a clinical instructor at Yale School of Medicine, my father is retiring. I do not know what he will do next. He told me he would sleep for a week and then baby-sit for my kids. I think there is some talk about travel too. Was that Dad or was that Mom? Whatever they do, I hope they both enjoy Dad's retirement. It is well deserved. Best wishes from me and everyone who knows and appreciates you.

Your daughter,

LISA GUTTENBERG WEISS.●

BENEFICIARY ACCESS AND MEDICARE PAYMENT EQUITY

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, today I urge the Senate to act on the Beneficiary Access and Medicare Payment Equity package before the end of the session. Nebraska's health care providers are hurting financially. They need help from Congress to stop these Medicare reimbursement cuts or many will not be able to provide treatment to Medicare patients. Our 40 million seniors who depend on the Medicare system for their

health care coverage need to know they have access to quality, affordable care. The bill addresses a number of Medicare inequities including cuts to hospitals, home health care providers, physical therapists, physicians, and skilled nursing facilities.

The Nebraska Hospital Association estimates that in this bill Nebraska hospitals would receive approximately \$56 million in additional revenue for one year and \$120 million over three years. The hospitals in my State need this funding to survive financially.

This legislation would have a tremendous impact on Nebraska's teaching hospitals. Teaching hospitals receive indirect medical education (IME) payments because they have higher patient care costs than non-teaching hospitals due to the extra costs incurred for teaching. The Balanced Budget Act, BBA, of 1997 cut these payments, and a provision in this bill would provide for additional relief. Nebraska has two academic medical centers—the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Creighton University Medical Center—and both would benefit from this legislation. Other hospitals in my State would also benefit including: Alegent Bergan Mercy in Omaha, Alegent Immanuel in Omaha, Nebraska Methodist in Omaha, BryanLGH Medical Center in Lincoln, St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln, Good Samaritan in Kearney, and St. Francis in Grand Island.

The legislation also increases the Federal Medicaid disproportionate share hospital, DSH, allotment in extremely low-DSH States, such as Nebraska, from 1 percent to 3 percent of program costs. Even though the allotment percentage would be tripled, it is still far less than the national average. The DSH program provides relief to safety net hospitals that provide critical health care access to 42 million uninsured people in our country. Nebraska and 14 other States receive far less funding through the Medicaid DSH program per Medicaid and uninsured resident than the rest of the Nation and this lack of funding threatens the viability of many safety net hospitals.

A number of other important provisions are included that would help Nebraska's hospitals including: equalizing the standardized amount for rural and other urban hospitals; adjusting the wage index rate; increasing Medicare DSH payments to rural hospitals; extending the hold harmless provision for rural hospitals for outpatient services for another year; and improving the Critical Access Hospital program by allowing more flexibility in allocating swing and inpatient acute care beds.

In addition to providing much-needed relief to hospitals, the bill also eliminates the 15 percent reduction in home health payments. This cut would reduce payments to home health care providers in my State by nearly \$2 million per year. Nebraska providers cannot afford this cut. The legislation also recognizes the additional costs in-

curred by rural home health care providers and give them an addition 10 percent in payments.

I am also pleased that the bill eliminates the \$1500 outpatient therapy cap for two years. This arbitrary limit discriminates against Medicare beneficiaries who desperately need outpatient therapy to help them recuperate from surgery, a stroke, or other medical condition.

As I mentioned last month, we also need to rectify the physician payment cut. Under current law, Medicare's physician payment rates are projected to fall by 12 percent over the next three years. Nebraska physicians' losses due to the 2003–2005 cuts will total about \$63 million or \$17,230 per physician. This comes on top of a 5.4 percent payment cut which cost Nebraska doctors a total of \$12.9 million or about \$3,875 per physician in 2002.

I also spoke of the need to help skilled nursing facilities which are experiencing severe financial difficulty. If action isn't taken, Nebraska's facilities will lose \$28.48 per patient per day next year for a total of \$10 million.

Finally, I have spoken many times about providing fiscal relief to our States. This legislation also includes \$5 billion in fiscal relief to States by increasing the Federal Medicaid matching rate and by providing a temporary social services block grant. This provision, that I helped author, would give Governors some needed flexibility in assessing the needs of their States. States would be eligible for the Medicaid funding increase as long as the eligibility levels they had in place on January 2, 2002 are maintained. Unfortunately, the Nebraska Legislature made Medicaid eligibility cuts in the recent special session, and these cuts would prevent our State from receiving the full funding available. However, I crafted a provision that would allow Nebraska to receive the funding if they reinstate these Medicaid cuts in the future.

We need to pass this legislation before the session ends. Our Nation's seniors need to know that they can depend on the Medicare system for their health care needs. I look forward to working with my colleagues in addressing these important issues.●

IDAHO'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

● Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, I rise today to salute a very special teacher in my State, Patti Perry, who was recently named as Idaho's Teacher of the Year.

Patti Perry teaches first grade at Skyway Elementary School in Coeur d'Alene. She has taught in Coeur d'Alene for 30 years, and there are many people in the community who look back fondly on the lessons they learned from her. In fact, one of her former students said that she has "been in my heart since the first day of first grade." I'm sure this is a sentiment shared by many.

I come from a family of teachers, so I know how much a good teacher can affect the life of a student. What that teacher imparts in a classroom can stay with a student for the rest of his or her life. It's obvious that Mrs. Perry has had such an impact. She assesses every student individually and tailors her lessons to them. She is a leader in the school and a mentor to other teachers. And, most important of all, she inspires her students to strive for their highest possible performance, academically and otherwise.

It's not really a surprise that Mrs. Perry won this award. What is remarkable, though, is that she's Coeur d'Alene School District's third teacher in five years to be named as Idaho's Teacher of the Year. It's clear that the Coeur d'Alene District is doing something right. Kootenai County, which has Coeur d'Alene as its county seat, is one of the fastest growing counties in Idaho, and I suspect this might have something to do with the outstanding quality of schools in the county. I'm very proud of Mrs. Perry, and I'm also very proud of the Coeur d'Alene School District. They are both setting a great example for the rest of Idaho, and the rest of the Nation, to follow.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment to the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4546) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2003 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

At 2:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 124. A joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2003, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 598. Resolution stating that the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Paul D. Wellstone, a Senator from the State of Minnesota.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 491 of the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1098(c)), and upon recommendation for the Majority Leader, the Speaker reappoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance for a 3-year term: Ms. Judith Flink of Morton Grove, Illinois.