

Given his very active participation in our community, and his work in helping shape young men into responsible adults, Tony lasiello is a Lehigh Valley Hero in my book.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes my Report from Pennsylvania.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
MICHAEL A. WEISS

HON. MELISSA A. HART

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, today I have the honor of saluting a dedicated leader from Pittsburgh, PA who has spent the past year doing some remarkable work to help people living with diabetes.

Michael A. Weiss has had a long, successful and diverse career benefiting numerous community and charitable organizations, and it all started following his graduation from our alma mater, Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, PA. He graduated with honors from W&J in 1970, and went on to earn his law degree from Vanderbilt University in 1973. He currently serves as a leader of my former law firm, the DKW Law Group's Corporate Practice in downtown Pittsburgh. Mike was a mentor to me, and the perfect professional. He is the kind of attorney who takes good cases, returns calls and gives good advice to avoid litigation. Today, however, I want to pay tribute to his service outside his profession, and on an issue very special to Mike, my family and countless others.

For the past year, Mike Weiss has served as Chairman of the National Board of Directors at the American Diabetes Association. The ADA is the nation's leading nonprofit health organization providing diabetes research, information and advocacy. The mission of the organization is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. It has had many successes, making living with diabetes less constraining and providing info on healthier lifestyles, possibly preventing the onset of Type II.

Within his role as Chairman, Mike Weiss has spearheaded the expansion of the ADA's advocacy programs. He is responsible for broadening the reach of ADA and increasing its partnerships with other groups and associations working towards the same goals.

For his work with the ADA, Mike Weiss will be awarded the 2003 Charles Best Award for Outstanding Contributions and Service to the Cause of Diabetes.

I wish Mike continued success with the organization and his other generous work, and I commend him on his superior service to his neighbors, community and all those who work toward an end of diabetes.

RECOGNIZING A TRADITION THAT
HONORS ALL DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, June 13th, 2003 marks the continuation of a long, estab-

lished tradition by the Disabled American Veterans organization, with their 62nd annual State Convention at the Santa Ana Hotel and Casino on Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico. Its purpose is to bring together and recognize those who have fought courageously in our Armed Forces from our state and from our region; who have sacrificed much in the name of our great country to insure the security and freedom of all its citizens. When a citizen thinks of Old Glory, of stars and stripes, of red, white and blue, they ultimately remember our men and women in uniform, and the price they have paid to defend this nation against all threats, both foreign and domestic. Some have paid the ultimate price with their lives, while others have endured great physical and mental hardships, from the wounds they have suffered, and the memories they have lived with from knowing the consequences of war. Every veteran present at this convention is an example of this enduring and proud spirit. These veterans' sacrifices and the courage they have shown must never be forgotten.

I am also honored to recognize the spouses and other family members of those veterans who have gone to war for the sake of the United States of America. It is never easy knowing that your family member is going to war; of not knowing of the conditions that he or she is fighting in, or the actions he or she must take to accomplish the mission, or to protect a fellow soldier. Separation from a loved one is always difficult, and trying. Life continues even during war, as children are born, as they continue to grow and mature, and holidays and other personal milestones pass during this time of separation. Separation also requires a great deal of endurance as well, with the hope that their family members will come home safely. It is this lasting sense of endurance, patriotism, and dedication to our nation that characterizes what it means to be an American.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me to recognize these remarkable individuals who are in attendance at this convention, both physically and in spirit, and to remember all that they have fought for, and all the victories they have achieved during their careers in the Armed Forces.

CREDIT UNIONS

HON. CHRIS CHOCOLA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that some in my state have questioned the patriotism of credit unions, saying that because they don't pay federal income tax they are "unpatriotic." Nothing could be further from the truth. While credit unions are, indeed, tax-exempt nonprofit financial cooperatives owned by their members, their record of patriotic service to the people of this nation should not be questioned.

Since first established in the United States during the early 20th century, credit unions have helped to serve those in our military; they are a role model for other financial institutions to follow. Many credit unions have worked with our soldiers, sailors and airmen while they have been stationed overseas during the recent conflict in the Persian Gulf. For

example, the Navy Federal Credit Union set up branches and ATM's in the Persian Gulf and onboard ships in order to serve their members during this conflict.

Credit unions have honored those in service to our country, not just in this most recent war, but in other wars as well. For example, the members of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU) have raised over \$140,000 for the World War II Memorial Fund.

Credit unions serve teachers, firefighters, police, federal employees, students and more on a daily basis—including many in this Congress. I thank them for supporting the leaders of our government. As non-profit financial cooperatives with volunteer boards, credit unions serve their members' needs and have been ranked number one in an independent consumer satisfaction survey for eighteen straight years—since the inception of the survey.

I applaud the credit unions of this nation for supporting America's freedom and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

SUPPORTING HEAD START

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, Head Start is a time-tested program that has improved the lives of children and their families for 38 years. I am proud to say that Head Start has improved the lives of those in my home district of San Bernardino County, California.

I recently received a letter from Ms. Brenda Clayton, a Head Start staff member in San Bernardino County. In her letter, Ms. Clayton says that she sees first-hand, every day, what a difference Head Start makes to children and their parents.

Ms. Clayton writes, "I generally see the parents at initial application or enrollment process, then I'll see these same parents 2 to 3 months later and they are excited to share with me all the good and wonderful things their child is now able to say and do, how their child has a zest for learning."

As we face the Head Start reauthorization process, Ms. Clayton has asked me that I do everything in my authority to see that her program does not become block-granted. Unfortunately, I must face the reality that this Republican-led Congress will impose these block grants, leaving less money, less oversight and leaving even more children behind.

Under a block grant system, Head Start is not guaranteed to receive funding. We must make sure that Head Start receives funding and receives it directly so that what little funds that are given to this highly important program are not diluted even further.

It simply doesn't make sense to put the fate of Head Start into the hands of the States. Our States are bankrupt! My State of California faces a budget shortfall of \$35 billion. But once again, we are forcing our cash-strapped States to pick up the tab at our children's expense.

We have already forced States to pick up the tab for the unfunded mandates of No Child Left Behind. And we're now forcing States to take over what the Federal Government has proven is a success! Republicans are taking

an essential program and completely dismantling it. It just doesn't make sense!

My Republican colleagues are at it once again—trying to limit the role of the Federal Government in public education under the excuse of “accountability” and better State and Federal coordination. If accountability was such a huge concern, then why does the Head Start reauthorization bill remove standards and requirements? And if States are facing such drastic budget shortfalls, then why are we tempting them with the opportunity to reduce services and transfer funds from Head Start to other services? It just doesn't make sense.

The only thing that makes sense is to bring Head Start back to its original, bipartisan state with the same strong, Federal accountability standards and increased funding so all eligible children can benefit from Head Start services. That is a program that makes sense.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VITO FOSSELLA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am not recorded on rollcall Nos. 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263 and 264. I was unavoidably detained and was not present to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted “yes,” on rollcall Nos. 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263 and 264.

RECOGNITION OF ART BROWN OF HECLA MINING CO.

HON. C.L. “BUTCH” OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House the distinguished accomplishments of Art Brown, chief executive officer of Hecla Mining Company, on the occasion of his retirement.

Art Brown retired last month from Hecla Mining after 36 years of service. Mr. Brown was manager of the Lucky Friday Mine in 1979, when silver prices rose from \$5 to \$50 per ounce, and Hecla became the No. 1 performer on the New York Stock Exchange. Last year, Hecla's stock rose 400 percent, again making it a top NYSE performer. However, it was not an easy task to keep the company afloat during the years between in which it was plagued by low market prices, environmental litigation and cash-flow problems. Under Mr. Brown's leadership, however, the company has moved from close to bankruptcy to a viable, growing enterprise producing record amounts of gold and silver in 2002. Under the visionary leadership of Art Brown, Hecla Mining Co. has survived and flourished. The company is now positioned to move forward into a future of growth and continued profitability.

I congratulate Art Brown on his success, and wish him an enjoyable retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF MEDICARE REFORM ACT

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to introduce the Medicare Reform Act. Along with the original cosponsors of the bill, Representative TOM TANCREDO, Representative MARILYN MUSGRAVE, Representative PETE SESSIONS, Representative WILLIAM JENKINS, and Representative DON MANZULLO, I believe that this proposal can improve Medicare and preserve it for the future.

Our current system is a patchwork program governed by tens of thousands of pages of rigid rules, regulations, guidelines and administrative decisions and the current system is filled with inefficiencies and waste. While Medicare will cover medicine for a patient who receives an injection at a doctor's office, it will not provide the same coverage to a patient who chooses to save Medicare doctors' fees by administering the same injection at home.

Medicare will pay for a kidney transplant—but not for anti-rejection drugs for the new kidney. If you stop taking medication because of the cost, Medicare will pay for a second kidney transplant.

Medicare covers the costs of home visits by occupational therapists and physical therapists but not respiratory therapists. The patient must come to the hospital or doctor's office—more expensive options.

In 2002, improper payments in the Medicare program were estimated at \$13.3 billion. Of that amount, \$7 billion was for services the government later deemed medically unnecessary.

I have authored the Medicare Reform Act of 2003, legislation that would reshape Medicare to closely resemble the health care system for federal employees. The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program provides high-quality health benefits to 8.6 million federal employees and retirees, including Members of Congress, in all 50 states. It is a typical employee health plan, except employees have a choice—they receive a guidebook describing their coverage options and choose the option that best meets their needs.

I want to give Medicare beneficiaries the same options.

By providing senior citizens and disabled individuals with the same health care benefits Members of Congress enjoy, my bill would improve preventive care and treatment of disease. It would provide modern insurance benefits, such as preventive and maintenance care for chronic conditions. And as in all private plans, a modern prescription drug benefit is an inherent part of this policy.

The health care plan for federal employees has demonstrated success in rural areas. 98 percent of rural counties offer at least three plans, and 87 percent offer six or more choices. My bill would create insurance parity through Medicare, by offering identical insurance options to beneficiaries in urban and rural areas on a state-by-state basis.

Finally, my bill would recognize the difference between poor and middle class seniors, and those in the highest income brackets, since premiums would be based on level of income. My proposal would pay the entire pre-

mium for senior citizens earning up to \$17,952 for singles and \$24,288 for couples (200 percent of the poverty level). Above that level, the premium paid would decrease by ten percent for each additional 100 percent over the poverty level. For senior citizens earning over \$71,809 for singles and over \$101,153 for couples (800 percent of the poverty level), the program would pay 30 percent of their premiums.

Income sensitive premiums, competitive plans, better cost control and preventative care will ensure that Medicare's price tag is kept low. In this way, we can assure Medicare will evolve with the times and be solvent for the future.

Government cannot prevent Americans from growing older. But we can help senior citizens enjoy higher quality of life, while providing the retirees of tomorrow with a sound Medicare program that will still exist for them, too.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY HONORS JULIE T. WU OF THE U.S. PHYSICS OLYMPIAD TEAM

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Julie T. Wu of Manalapan High School in Englishtown, New Jersey. Ms. Wu was in Washington, recently as one of 24 members of the U.S. Physics Olympiad Team vying for a chance to represent the United States at the International Physics Olympiad on July 12th in Taipei, Taiwan.

The U.S. Physics Olympiad program has a long history of success. It is designed to encourage excellence in physics education and to reward outstanding physics students. It provides an opportunity for top students to take part in an outstanding scientific and cultural experience that would not normally be available through the tradition high school curriculum.

The U.S. Physics Team members were selected from a pool of more than 1400 students who were nominated by their high school physics teachers to take the Olympiad physics exams. These students represent the “best and the brightest” physics talent in our Nation. Julie is a perfect example of the type of talented and motivated students that take part in the program.

Julie's accomplishments as a young scholar are impressive. She has received the Siemens' Award for her performance on the Advanced Placement exams in math and science. Julie is also a National Merit Scholar, and has placed 1st in the New Jersey Science League for biology and physics, 2nd in Chemistry Nomenclature in the New Jersey Chemistry Olympics, 3rd for the US National Chemistry Olympiad qualifying exam, and 1st for biology and 3rd in chemistry in the National Science Olympiad.

In addition to her impressive list of academic achievements, Julie has excelled outside the classroom as well. She is co-captain of the varsity tennis team, treasurer of her school's chapter of Junior Statesmen of America, and a section editor of her school's yearbook.

We are honored to have Julie representing the 12th district of New Jersey at this prestigious competition.