

Our Constitution has served us well for over 200 years, but it will continue as a strong, vibrant, and vital foundation for freedom only so long as the American people remain dedicated to the basic principles on which it rests. Thus, as the United States continues into its third century of constitutional democracy, let us renew our commitment to, in the words of our Constitution's preamble: "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity. . . ." I know that the Prairie Rose Chapter of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution joins with me in urging all Americans to renew their commitment to, and understanding of, our Constitution, particularly during our current time of crisis, when Americans are fighting overseas to defend our liberties here at home.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS
WEEK

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight, and I want to especially thank my good friend, Congresswoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ from New York and applaud my House colleagues for their hard work in bringing us together here to acknowledge the important role small business plays in our economy and thank those small business owners for their many contributions.

I've always said that small business is the backbone of our State and national economy. Many small businesses are suffering in these trying financial times. Government contracts and spending are a vital source of revenue for small businesses, and in economically tough times it is vital that all levels of government continue to pay diligent attention to small business in their purchasing and contracts. Small businesses do not have high powered lobbyists, and it is important that we ensure that businesses of all sizes have access to government contracts regardless of their ability to buy influence.

Today I would like to discuss some important federal legislation that I believe will have important and positive implications for small business, job growth, and economic recovery in this country. Two of the top priorities for the remainder of the 108th Congress are reviving the struggling U.S. economy and reauthorizing the federal highway and transit programs.

I am also pleased to announce a congressional resolution that I have authored which will continue aggressive advocacy on behalf of American firms competing abroad, and specifically encourage small and medium-sized American businesses to explore trade openings and gain access to potentially lucrative markets, such as Iraq.

We all believe that America's small businesses must not be left behind in the globalization process. Although small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, the overseas investment potential of the small business sector remains relatively untapped.

This resolution's objectives are to continue aggressive trade promotion and advocacy on behalf of American firms competing abroad as well as to focus on the next generation of trade issues growing out of the changing global marketplace.

As Congress continues its work, I will be working to make sure that more good news is on the way for small businesses. And I want to assure you that I will continue to strongly support Federal programs that benefit small businesses.

Both our Federal and state government has an obligation to aid, assist and protect the interests of small businesses. The future of America depends on it.

TRIBUTE TO BASEBALL GREAT
MICKEY VERNON

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Saturday, September 20, 2003 will be a special day for legendary baseball batting champ Mickey Vernon as his hometown of Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania honors their favorite son by unveiling a life size statue of Vernon on the same ball field where he played sandlot ball. The statue will be unveiled at 2:30 p.m. at the Marcus Hook Memorial Field on Market Street.

Mickey Vernon is a hero in my hometown. Marcus Hook is a close-knit, working-class town on the Delaware River. The people of Marcus Hook have community spirit and have much cause for civic pride. One of the unifying bonds in our hometown is our great pride in the career and achievements of Mickey Vernon. In the ballparks of Marcus Hook the name of Mickey Vernon is revered. Even today, more than thirty years after his retirement, kids in Marcus Hook still play ball in the Mickey Vernon Little League.

Mickey Vernon, one of baseball's greatest first basemen of all time has earned a special place in the annals of baseball history. Mickey played 21 years in the big leagues, thirteen of those in our Nation's Capital where he played for the Washington Senators. He was known as a slick-fielding left-handed first baseman with a short, compact lefty swing.

In 1946, Mickey won the first of his two American League batting titles, hitting .353 while banging out a league-leading 51 doubles and knocking in 85 runs. He won a second Silver Bat in 1953, when he again lead the league with a .337 average and 43 doubles. That year, he also smashed 15 home runs and drove in a career-best 115 runs.

For his career, Mickey batted .286, drove in 1,311 runs, and hit 490 doubles. He played in seven All-Star games, and after a time held career records for first basemen in assists, put-outs, chances, and games played. He was durable and consistent, playing 115 or more games for 14 straight years.

It is well known that Mickey Vernon was President Dwight D. Eisenhower's favorite player. On opening day, 1954, with Ike in attendance, Vernon hit a home run in the 10th inning to defeat the New York Yankees. President Eisenhower called Vernon into his box to congratulate him.

Typical of many ballplayers of his era, Mickey lost two years in the prime of his career,

1944-45, because he answered his country's call to service during World War II. When we honor individuals like Mickey Vernon we promote the essence of what is good and wholesome in our Nation. Individuals like Mickey Vernon represent the essence of courage and endurance—the qualities that helped make our Nation great. He is a true American hero in every sense of the word.

Few towns in America can claim to be birthplace of a genuine baseball hero, and the people of Marcus Hook are very proud to call Mickey Vernon one of our own.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mickey Vernon for his outstanding career and his major league contributions to baseball, to his community, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and to the Nation with best wishes as well to his wife, Libby.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL
ALL SCHEDULES PRESCRIPTION
ELECTRONIC REPORTING
(NASPER) ACT

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, on September 4 my colleague FRANK PALLONE and I introduced the National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting (NASPER) Act. This legislation would establish a national electronic data bank for practitioner monitoring of schedule II, III and IV controlled substances.

Our Nation has been fighting a long battle against the scourge of drug abuse and its devastating effects upon our society. The lives that are ruined, the families that are destroyed, and the loss to societal productivity are almost impossible to comprehend.

Unfortunately, one of the fastest growing areas of drug abuse is through the diversion of prescription drugs. This diversion can include such activities as "doctor shopping" where individuals go from doctor to doctor obtaining multiple prescriptions, or through the illegal sales of prescription drugs by doctors and pharmacists, or by prescription forgery.

My own State of Kentucky has been hit particularly hard by the epidemic of oxycontin abuse. In a 2001 hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and State, Rod Maggard, a former police chief in Harzard, KY, testified on the effects of the oxycontin epidemic on our State. He told committee members how the drug had "demoralized our community . . . it bankrupted spiritually, morally, and financially people all over our area." The Associated Press reported how Kentucky was experiencing a crime wave as addicts sought to obtain the drug oxycontin.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the most effective ways we can help prevent prescription drug abuse is by getting information to those who are on the front line in this battle—that is the doctors, themselves. Today, in most States when a patient walks into a doctor's office requesting prescription medication, that doctor has no way of knowing if he is the first physician that patient has seen or the fifth. He simply has to rely on the patient to be honest with him. Now obviously, if this patient is an addict or is trying to scam the doctor, the doctor is not going to be told the truth. And yet

we expect this doctor to treat the patient and to be responsible in prescribing medication.

The NASPER Act would take the guess work out of this situation. With a national electronic data bank, the doctor could simply access prescription information and determine what, if any, medication the patient should be given. The bill is consistent with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the patient would have to give his written consent before the doctor could access the data bank. Only the doctor or pharmacist who is currently treating the patient could request the information. Each request would have to be certified by the treating practitioner or pharmacist that the information is necessary for the purpose of providing medical or pharmaceutical treatment or to evaluate the need for such treatment for a bona fide current patient.

It is also important to note that as the population in our country ages, there will be more and more people who visit multiple doctors for various treatments. The NASPER Act would help doctors coordinate the medication their patient is receiving from other practitioners so that the patient does not experience an adverse medication reaction.

Currently 15 States have some type of Intra-state Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Two additional States are currently in the pilot stage of implementing such a program. A May 2002 General Accounting Office (GAO) study found that in States where a PDMP was in place, "the presence of a PDMP helps a State reduce its illegal drug diversion . . ." The same report also states that "the existence of a PDMP within a State, however, appears to increase drug diversion activities in contiguous non-PDMP States. When States begin to monitor drugs, drug diversion activities tend to spill across boundaries to non-PDMP States." In other words, those who want to scam the system know that they will have a difficult time doing so within a particular State, so they just move the problem across State lines.

The State of Kentucky has one of the most effective PDMPs in the Nation. However, there are a number of reports that show drug diversion problems, particularly in the area of oxycontin abuse, have increased in the contiguous States of Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia due to the presence of Kentucky's PDMP. I believe the only way we can truly address this problem is by coordinating our efforts across State lines.

The NASPER Act builds on the work that has already begun in the States. Under this legislation, individual States are permitted to set up their own PDMP to the exclusion of the Federal program created by the act, as long as the States submit the information required by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to the Federal data bank. However, the NASPER Act recognizes that if we are truly going to address this problem, we need a Federal role to ensure that the States will be able to share the information across State lines. An interstate system would allow doctors to get the information they need to better serve their patients.

I would like to thank Chairman TAUZIN and the staff of the Energy and Commerce Committee for their assistance on this issue. The chairman has been very attentive to concerns that I and others have raised and I look forward to continuing to work with him on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, advances in technology have revolutionized health care delivery in this Nation. Isn't it time that we used this technology to better serve our citizens in the area of prescription drugs? I would ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: A CELEBRATION

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to appropriately draw attention to the contributions of our nation's prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their proud tradition of educating and preparing African-Americans for the past 166 years.

This year, we celebrate these universities the week of September 14 to September 20, and I feel honored to participate in such a noble cause.

Over 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been established in the United States. These institutions comprise only 3 percent of all centers for higher education in the United States, but account for 30 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded to African Americans each year.

I am very proud that Bowie State University, the oldest of Maryland's four HBCUs is located in my district and I am privileged to represent the students, faculty and staff members who make great things happen on this campus. (There are three other HBCUs in MD—Morgan State in Baltimore City, Coppin State in Baltimore and the University of Maryland—Eastern Shore). Bowie State is the descendant of the first school opened by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People in 1865. BSU rightfully boasts a number of significant and praiseworthy statistics:

First nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees in computer science and information sciences;

Second nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees in psychology;

Third nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees in communications; Eighth, nationally in graduating minorities with master's degrees in psychology;

Fourth among HBCUs in granting master's degrees of all disciplines;

Fourth in extramural funding in the University System of Maryland (USM) with the highest percentage of increase in the System (48.1 percent) for the 2000–2001 fiscal year.

Ninth nationally in graduating all minorities with master's degrees in communications;

Thirteenth nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees;

Additionally, in 1995 BSU won an 11-year, \$27 million award from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration/National Science Foundation to become one of the six national Model Institutions of excellence in science, engineering, and mathematics.

HBCUs provide a vital role in educating the next generation of our nation's leaders by extending to our students access to the best op-

portunities for personal and professional success. Most important, these schools champion the cause of equal access to education, access that is critically important during a time when fiscal constraints have burdened our state and ultimately our families, making affording higher education even more difficult for many Americans.

In fact, the Maryland Higher Education Commission recently announced that the number of Maryland college students on a waiting list for state-sponsored financial aid increased almost 50 percent this fall—at the same time, tuition and the number of college applicants has increased. Last school year 133,692 Marylanders filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the nationwide form that determines aid eligibility. That was up from 118,537 applications from Maryland in the 2001–2002 school year, a 12 percent increase.

Many historically black institutions are facing similar financial challenges, and regrettably, for some, closing has become a reality. The federal government must realize that Historically Black Colleges do not simply provide educational opportunities and benefits to African Americans, but educating our nation's young people, regardless of race, improves the aptitude of all of our people. The entire country has gained from these fine institutions of education, and with the help of the federal government, the youth of our nation will continue to be well educated for generations to come.

Congress and the President can acknowledge this by adequately funding the programs that support the efforts of these important institutions. The House of Representatives included \$224 million in funding for the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges program and the Strengthening HBCU Graduate Institutions for fiscal year 2004. This is a \$10 million increase in funding from last year, and as a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, I will continue to support these programs and will fight for increased funding to help them continue their mission and tradition of educating African-Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me this week in saluting the contributions of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which have been educating students for more than 100 years. I am grateful to the nation's HBCUs for their commitment to academic excellence for all students, including low-income and educationally disadvantaged students, and am especially proud of the four HBCUs in the state of Maryland.

RECOGNITION OF ELECTRIC ENERGY, INCORPORATED

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of Electric Energy, Incorporated located in Joppa, Illinois. Electric Energy Incorporated has done an excellent job of providing energy to southern Illinois for the past fifty years.

I am very proud to have Electric Energy, Incorporated located in the 19th Congressional