

private sector. Through fair labor negotiations between the VA and medical staffs, adequate staff levels and the means for the delivery of patient care can be properly outlined. Without sufficient communication and coordination on the parts of both the VA and its medical workers, everyone will ultimately suffer, and no one more than our veterans. The physical and emotional well being of our veterans should not be marginalized and this legislation is one step towards ensuring that they receive the proper high-quality care that they deserve.

TRIBUTE TO MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay special tribute to Mother Teresa of Calcutta in celebration of her extraordinary life.

The world has always been filled with great humanitarians, people who donate millions of dollars, and people who make their voices heard. Yet, Mother Teresa stands out in this group. She dedicated her entire adult life to caring for the terminally ill, the unwanted and unloved. Despite these people's pain and suffering, she gave them a reason to smile. Mother Teresa received her calling in 1946 and humbly spent the next 51 years devoted to helping the people of India. In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1985 she received the highest U.S. civilian award, the Medal of Freedom.

Mother Teresa had love in her heart for all God's children, and for that, I am honored today to pay tribute to her.

A TRIBUTE TO THOMAS C. MOHR OF HILLSDALE, MI

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to Thomas C. Mohr of Hillsdale, MI as a friend, a great American, and most recently for being named Michigan's "Clerk of the Year."

Selected by a seven-member panel, Mr. Mohr was honored for over 15 years of service to the state and as the Hillsdale County Clerk. Mohr has been active in community service and is responsible for recording the official county statistics as well as criminal and civil trials in Circuit Court. Additionally, Mr. Mohr has supervised elections for the past 15 years in a most professional manner.

Thomas Mohr puts his job first and personal feelings second. It's no wonder then that the local newspaper calls him a leader of Hillsdale. Peers say he is "dependable, trustworthy, and very conservative."

Mr. Mohr has a long list of accomplishments: a former teacher in Litchfield, a U.S. Navy Veteran, township clerk, county commissioner, and father of two. In addition to his County Clerk duties he serves as the treasurer for the Michigan Association of County Clerks. He received his Bachelor of Science degree

from Central Michigan University and Masters in Public Administration.

Mr. Mohr sets an example for all of us as he has quietly gone about his life and work. As Theodore Roosevelt said, "The first duty of an American citizen, then, is that he shall work in politics; his second duty is that he shall do that work in a practical manner; and his third is that it shall be done in accord with the highest principles of honor and justice." Thomas C. Mohr has done just that.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Historically Black College and Universities of the Second District of South Carolina. Benedict College, South Carolina State University and Claflin University serve more than 10,000 minority students seeking a better future for themselves and their families through education.

I've personally had the chance to visit many of these institutions and have seen firsthand what a tremendous job they are doing in preparing our youth for the future. I have proudly cosponsored legislation to strengthen minority-serving institutions and help to break down barriers that currently prevent some students from pursuing their dreams through education. I have also cosponsored bills to assist minority-serving institutions as they participate in graduate programs under the Higher Education Act, as well as international and foreign language studies programs.

Republicans in Congress have recognized the value of schools like Benedict, SCSU, and Claflin and have increased funding by 96 percent and by 172 percent for Historically Black Graduate Institutions (HBGIs) since 1995. This year, HBCUs received \$214 million and the HBGI program received \$53.4 million. The House-passed spending measure for next year adds another \$10 million for HBCUs, bringing funding to nearly \$225 million.

And earlier this year the House approved legislation, the Ready to Teach Act, to strengthen the nation's teacher training programs, including creation of "Centers of Excellence" at minority-serving institutions to bolster teacher quality and training.

The strong leadership provided by Presidents Dr. David Holmes Swinton of Benedict College, Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr. of South Carolina State University, and Dr. Henry N. Tisdale of Claflin University combined with Congress' commitment to increase access to college for all Americans will ensure a brighter future for the students of South Carolina's Second District.

HONORING THE GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY PIONEER CLASS OF 1967

HON. PETER HOEKSTRA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Grand Valley State University Pioneer Class of 1967. The first graduating class of Grand Valley State University assembled on the Allendale Campus in September, 1963. There were 226 members of the class, with 156 ultimately graduating with baccalaureate degrees from the institution. The college in that first year consisted of only two fully completed buildings: Lake Michigan Hall and the Seidman House student center. During the four-year journey of the Pioneer Class through Grand Valley State College (as it was then known), the campus was constantly changing as new buildings and facilities were added.

The class was comprised primarily of students from the West Michigan area who were carefully selected for academic aptitude and other indicators of potential success at the new, largely non-residential college. They concentrated and succeeded in their college programs despite the distractions of the increasing turmoil of the Vietnam War and the American cultural revolution that began in the mid-1960s.

The students were challenged by a rigorous curriculum, coupled with shortages of facilities and equipment, rudimentary library and audiovisual resources, and a virtual absence of traditional student life opportunities during their four years on the campus. The college did not receive academic accreditation from the North Central Association until late in the Pioneers' senior year. Members of the Pioneer Class competed on Grand Valley's first intercollegiate athletics teams, and inaugurated new housing, arts, writing, intramural sports, and community service programs at the college. They truly paved the way for generations of Grand Valley students to come.

Nevertheless, the Pioneer Class met all academic expectations and graduated in June, 1967. Class members have gone on to succeed in business, industry, education, religion, science and government. They met the challenges of life and study at the new college and are the first in a long line of distinguished, accomplished graduates from what has become a major regional institution of higher learning.

They are saluted upon the occasion of the 40th anniversary of their arrival at Grand Valley with a gala reunion in connection with Grand Valley State University's Homecoming 2003 on Oct. 3 and 4. The theme of this year's celebration honors them and all those who came after them at Grand Valley: "Grand Valley State University: A Pioneering Spirit."

INTERDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring the attention of this body to an event

that took place last week. On September 12, 2003, some of the finest citizens from around the world assembled in Philadelphia, the birthplace of our democracy, to recognize the first "Interdependence Day".

This historic event brought together public, civic and corporate leaders, distinguished academics and diplomats, and interested citizens and students, to reflect together on the fact that the world is becoming more and more connected. In a global climate that is too often rife with conflict, the participants of Interdependence Day examined ways to best diffuse the tensions that exist between nations and cultures. Indeed, the choice of September 12th for Interdependence Day was made in the hope that the symbolism of "the day after" would encourage citizens from around the world to see that terrorism and war are also opportunities for civic renewal and global cooperation.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to sign the Declaration of Interdependence—a document affirming the interdependent character of the post-modern world—to ponder questions of the relationship of independence to interdependence, and to celebrate the creation of an important 21st century commemorative event.

Interdependence Day events took place this year not just in Philadelphia, but in Budapest and in a number of schools and colleges in the United States. By the year 2004, the sponsors at the Democracy Collaborative expect to have many more venues. Mr. Speaker, I commend those who came together to celebrate Interdependence Day in Philadelphia, and those around the country and the world who are working to see that that horrors of September 11 are never repeated.

CELEBRATING THE SITE DEDICATION OF THE GERALD R. FORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the site dedication of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, which is located in my district.

This University has always been at the vanguard of education, research, and preparing the best minds in the nation to confront the problems of this world. In 1916 the Institute of Public Administration was founded as one of the first schools to prepare students for the challenges of the public sector. It was reorganized as the Institute of Public Policy in 1968, and the curriculum expanded to include economic analysis, political science and quantitative methods. In 1995, the Institute was reestablished as an independent school within the University of Michigan—the School of Public Policy, which was renamed for my dear friend President Gerald R. Ford in 1999. President Ford is the only U.S. President from Michigan and the only president to graduate from this University. He took office at a dark hour in our nation's history and restored its faith in the Presidency through his wisdom, his courage, and his integrity.

The Ford School is guided by the expertise of Dean Rebecca M. Blank, a former advisor

to President Clinton. She leads a small, close-knit community that fosters academic rigor, intellectual curiosity, and vigorous debate. Regular luncheon meetings and special presentations draw people together for discussion of pressing policy problems. A wide range of student activities—from soccer teams to lecture series—creates a lively and energetic environment. Students serve on all decision-making committees and play an important role in Ford School governance.

Public policy is a multidisciplinary field and the Ford School is home to several multidisciplinary research centers. The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy Research (CLOSUP) and the National Poverty Research Center are housed at the Ford School. Their work gives policy makers, from Lansing to Washington, DC, accurate analysis and innovative ideas on society's most pressing problems.

Most importantly, this school prepares our nation's leaders. It takes the best minds from across the country and helps to focus their energies to making this world a better place. This school seeks solutions to our most intractable problems, and ennobles those who have the calling of patriotism, selflessness, and leadership. It is a testament to our great state, our great university, and our great former president, Gerald Ford.

Mr. Speaker, the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy is a tremendous asset both to the University and the state of Michigan. I ask that you and all of my colleagues rise to congratulate the school on this important event.

ON THE INAUGURAL BRIEFING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL SPINA BIFIDA CAUCUS AND RECOGNIZING THE SPINA BIFIDA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of Congress' newest caucuses—The Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus.

This Congressional Member Organization (CMO) was co-founded and is co-chaired by my good friend Representative BART STUPAK of Michigan and me. The Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus is dedicated to improving the healthcare and overall quality of life for the 70,000 Americans and their families living with spina bifida.

This year has been a successful year for the patients and families who live with spina bifida, especially the members of the non-profit Spina Bifida Association of America who have done indefatigable work promoting an agenda of hope and research. In addition to securing \$2 million to establish the National Spina Bifida Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) earlier this year, a major gathering of leading spina bifida researchers was held here in Washington this past May. The successful conference played a major role in helping to chart the future path of spina bifida research.

Yesterday, we marked another milestone—the official launch and first briefing of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus. In very short time, more than 20 Representatives supportive

of our mission have joined the caucus. As more Members learn of the mission and legislative focus of the caucus, we are confident they too will join. I look forward to hosting additional informative briefings to better educate both Members and staff about spina bifida.

All of these successes would have been impossible if not for the work of the Spina Bifida Association of America and the Spina Bifida Foundation. Under the Leadership of Foundation President Hal Pote, Association President Alex Brodrick, and CEO Cindy Brownstein, the SBAA has made tremendous strides these past few years in helping all Americans—and their families—who live with spina bifida.

I wish the SBAA the best for continued success and I look forward to continuing to lead efforts in Congress on behalf of spina bifida patients and families.

REMEMBERING GENERAL BILL CREECH

HON. JIM GIBBONS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to a distinct man of service and to join Nevadans and Americans in honoring the memory of retired Air Force General Wilbur L. "Bill" Creech.

Bill Creech started at the bottom as a private in the Air Force in 1944, and he retired forty years later as four-star general, and commander of Tactical Air Command, or TAC. However, he will not be remembered only as a man who rose from the bottom to the highest of heights. He will be remembered as a man who changed the United States Air Force.

The current Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General John Jumper, who served as Creech's executive officer at TAC, said, "No single officer has had greater influence on the Air Force in recent times than General Bill Creech. He transformed the way the Air Force conducts warfare."

Bill Creech did indeed change the Air Force. The General revitalized TAC by improving its efficiency, modernizing the forces with transformational weapons and tactics, and developing the teamwork that still exists in our Air Force. As a fighter pilot, I personally experienced the impact Bill Creech had on the Air Force. His leadership philosophy made everyone in a unit—flyers, maintainers, and support personnel—believe in the value of making things better. This philosophy spread beyond TAC to the entire Air Force. The men and women who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan today are the beneficiaries of his wisdom and leadership.

For Nevadans, General Creech is probably most appreciated as the "father of the Thunderbirds". After a tragic accident on January 18, 1982 claimed the lives of four team members, many people questioned the value of the Aerial Demonstration Squadrons. But Bill Creech believed in the Thunderbirds. He saw the values that the team demonstrated and knew they were important for the Air Force and our nation. General Creech put himself on the line to back the team and make it the great organization it is today. Even today, in the shadow of the accident on September 14,