

American history. Dr. Woodson chose the second week of February because two people he felt had dramatically affected the lives of Black Americans were born during that month: Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. In addition, the month of February is significant for the birthdays of W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Eubie Blake and the founding of the NAACP.

I am pleased to join in this celebration and I hope that every person will take a moment to reflect on the life and legacies of individuals like Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks and Thurgood Marshall. Their fight, and the work of so many others, helped bring social justice to communities throughout the country. As we celebrate this year's theme, "The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections," we also honor the achievements and legacy of African-Americans and are reminded that we must continue to remember the contributions and sacrifices throughout history.

I encourage all Americans to gain awareness of and appreciation for African-American history.

NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues and the citizens of this great nation that March is National Eye Donor Month.

I rise also because cornea transplantation is an issue with which I have had some personal experience. One of my sons is one of the 46,000 patients who receive cornea transplants each year. Through the altruistic act of donation, my son's quality of life was substantially improved. These transplant surgeries can relieve patients of glared or blurred vision, painful swelling, and can effectively avoid corneal blindness, something that afflicts over forty thousand Americans every year.

As you may know Mr. Speaker, the first corneal transplant was performed in 1905, and the first eye bank opened in New York in 1944. Since then, eye banks have flourished nationwide and over half a million patients have received the gift of sight. These nonprofit organizations have also been instrumental in the advancement of medical science. Their facilitation and safeguarding of these precious gifts have allowed researchers to promulgate transplant procedures that have resulted in extraordinarily high success rates.

The achievements of eye banks are self-evident. Currently, eye banks meet our nation's need for corneal and sclera tissue. In 2002, 50,857 corneal grafts, given by over 46,000 donors, were supplied by U.S. eye banks. Today, every American who needs a corneal transplant can expect to receive one due to the generous donation of another. It is also important to note that the number of eye and tissue donors is enormous when compared to donors of solid organs. Approximately 10 individuals donate eyes and tissue for every person that donates organs.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that over one million Americans age 40 and over are currently blind, and that an additional 2.4 million are visually impaired.

It is speculated that over the next 30 years, with the retirement of the Baby Boom Generation, this problem will double. I would therefore ask and encourage my colleagues, as well as all Americans, to sign a donor card and to speak with their loved ones about their donation wishes. Under the auspices of the Eye Bank Association of America, the restoration of sight is a miracle that has become reality in our lifetime. I urge this Congress to celebrate their accomplishments, and to become more involved in matters relating to transplantation.

RECOGNITION OF AMANDA TOOMEY

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Amanda Toomey, a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, Troop 3083, and in earning the most prestigious honor of The Gold Award.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement attainable in girl scouting. To earn The Gold Award, a scout must complete five requirements, all of which promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values, and leadership skills. The requirements include, (1). earning four interest project patches, each of which requires seven activities that center on skill building, technology, service projects, and career exploration, (2). earning the career exploration pin, which involves researching careers, writing resumes, and planning a career fair or trip, (3). earning the senior girl scout leadership award, which requires a minimum of 30 hours of work using leadership skills, (4). designing a self-development plan that requires assessment of ability to interact with others and prioritize values, participation for a minimum of 15 hours in a community service project, and development of a plan to promote girl scouting, and (5). spending a minimum of 50 hours planning and implementing a Girl Scout Gold Award project that has a positive lasting impact on the community.

For her Gold Award project, Amanda led a Daisy Troop.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Amanda Toomey for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of The Gold Award.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR DAVID JORDAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of Black History Month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of distinguished African-Americans in Mississippi's Second Congressional District.

Today, I rise to pay tribute to Senator David Jordan. Senator Jordan earned a BS degree

from Mississippi Valley State University. He went on to earn a MS degree in Chemistry from the University of Wyoming. Senator Jordan then went on to become a teacher.

Senator Jordan has also been very active in fighting for civil rights and politics. He has participated in many boycotts, marches, and class-action suits. Senator Jordan require more time and services in teaching people how to use voting machines. Senator Jordan also fought on behalf of the Second Congressional District during recent redistricting.

Senator Jordan has also served as President of the Greenwood Voter's League and President of the Greenwood City council. He was first elected to the state Senate in 1983. Senator Jordan has had a great deal of success during his time in office.

IMPROVE VETERANS' ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, today I am again introducing legislation, the Veterans Medication Accessibility Act, which would permit veterans to obtain prescription medications from Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals using prescriptions written by their family doctor. This legislation is identical to H.R. 1717, a bill I introduced in the last Congress.

Our nation's veterans are eligible to receive health care at VA facilities for illnesses and injuries that are not only service-related but also those incurred after their service. Because the VA acknowledges that some veterans have more severe ailments, a veteran is placed in one of seven priority categories when seeking care. Those with serious service-connected disabilities are placed in a high priority category while those in generally good health and with income exceeding a certain amount are placed in a lower priority group for scheduling of care.

Currently, those veterans that do not have service-connected injuries and whose income is above the level that makes them eligible for free care may fill their prescriptions at VA facilities for the low cost of \$7 per prescription per 30-day supply. However, in order to obtain these medicates from the VA, these veterans must first receive an outpatient visit with a VA physician.

While I have heard from many veterans who are eager to take advantage of reduced-cost medications, many are not disabled, poor, and do not suffer from a service-connected ailment, which means they must often wait from several months to over a year for their requisite outpatient visit. This places an unnecessary financial burden on our veterans who must pay retail prices to fill their prescriptions while they wait to see a VA primary care physician. This policy can also impose a health burden, as this long wait may discourage veterans from seeking VA medication treatment altogether.

My legislation would allow veterans immediate access to needed medications by allowing them to fill prescriptions written by their family doctor at the VA.

This change would provide our veterans with timely access to low-cost prescription

drugs while also reducing the number of outpatient visits that VA physicians must perform each year. VA facilities would then be able to devote more time and care to those veterans who require inpatient services.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation to give our nation's veterans prompt access to the prescription medications that they need and have earned.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, ten years ago this month, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act (PL 103-3), legislation that allows employees to take time off from work to care for a new baby or sick family member. Because of this landmark legislation, more than 35 million Americans have been able to take unpaid leave without the risk of losing their jobs.

Today, I am introducing the Family and Medical Leave Enhancement Act. Building upon the success of the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), this legislation would allow more people to benefit from FMLA by allowing employees in companies with more than 25 employees to take Family and Medical Leave and would extend employee leave for workers to meet their family's needs. The legislation includes 24 hours of leave (during any 12-month period) for parents and grandparents to go to parent-teacher conferences or to take their children, grandchildren or other family members to the doctor for regular medical or dental appointments.

Currently, the FMLA allows qualified workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for newborns, seek emergency medical care for themselves, parents, children under 18 or a legal spouse. My legislation would add commonsense enhancements to FMLA.

In 1997, this legislative measure was supported by President Bill Clinton. In February 1997, President Clinton said, "I call upon Congress to expand the family leave law to give parents an additional 24 hours of unpaid leave each year to take a child or an elderly relative to a regular doctor's appointment or to attend parent-teacher conferences at school. In so doing, we'll make our families stronger and our workers more productive, building the kind of country and economy we all want for our children."

On behalf of America's families, I urge my fellow colleagues to join me in support of the Family and Medical Leave Enhancement Act.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CÉSAR ESTRADA CHÁVEZ LANDS LEGACY STUDY ACT

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I proudly introduce the César Estrada Chávez Land Legacy Study

Act. This bill will look for ways to honor César Estrada Chávez, founder of the United Farm Workers and passionate champion of human and civil rights.

Specifically, the bill directs the National Park Service to look for ways to recognize Chávez's contributions to our society through historical sites and park areas. It is the first step in honoring his tremendous accomplishments and the local communities where his footprints were made.

César Chávez was a humble man. Little did anyone know the greatness that he would bestow on future generations.

In his early childhood, César Chávez was raised as a farm worker in Yuma, Arizona. Raised during the Great Depression, his family lost everything and was forced to join the thousands of farm workers that wandered the Southwest to find work. During his youth, the Chávez family migrated throughout the Southwest, working in various farms that fed our country.

The young César Chávez experienced first hand the hardships and injustices of the thousand of farm workers at that time. His home was barely livable and his school hardly fit to be called schoolhouse.

Unfair labor practices—harassment, abuse, long hours, low pay, hazardous working conditions and limited education opportunities kept farm workers from being self-sufficient and empowered citizens.

Witnessing and experiencing this lifestyle, César Chávez sought to make changes in the way farm workers were treated.

He united many others who also suffered similar atrocities with those who empathized with the struggle to become part of the union movement. In 1952, he left the fields and joined the Community Service Organization. There he conducted voter registration drives and campaigns against racial and economic discrimination.

In 1962, he took his vast experience, his compassion, and his brothers and sisters in this multi-ethnic struggle and started the National Farmworkers Association—today's United Farmworkers of America.

The UFW succeeded in organizing the oppressed. They overcame this oppression through boycotts and pickets, and when all else failed, hunger strikes.

Chávez was a student of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent philosophies. He knew that you cannot unite people through violent means, but you can connect them by joining hands in peaceful demonstration.

Since its inception, the UFW has achieved incredible results through its organization. Fair wages, health care coverage, pension benefits, housing, pesticide regulations, and countless other rights and protections are more a reality because of the UFW and in turn because of its founder—César E. Chávez.

In the past, we have honored other heroes, like Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement, through national parks and land. The life of César Chávez and his family provides an outstanding opportunity to demonstrate and interpret the history of agricultural labor in the west through the National Parks Service.

RECOGNITION OF SABRINA WELLS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Sabrina Wells, a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, Troop 300, and in earning the most prestigious honor of the Gold Award.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement attainable in Girl Scouting. To earn the gold award, a scout must complete five requirements, all of which promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values, and leadership skills. The requirements include: 1. Earning four interest project patches, each of which requires seven activities that center on skill building, technology, service projects, and career exploration; 2. Earning the Career Exploration Pin, which involves researching careers, writing resumes, and planning a career fair or trip; 3. Earning the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, which requires a minimum of 30 hours of work using leadership skills; 4. Designing a self-development plan that requires assessment of ability to interact with others and prioritize values, participation for a minimum of 15 hours in a community service project, and development of a plan to promote Girl Scouting; and 5. Spending a minimum of 50 hours planning and implementing a Girl Scout Gold Award project that has a positive lasting impact on the community.

For her Gold Award project, Sabrina organized a golf clinic for middle and high school girls.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Sabrina Wells for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of the Gold Award.

TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY HALL NICHOLS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of Black History Month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of distinguished African-Americans in Mississippi's Second Congressional District.

Today I rise to pay tribute to Shirley Hall Nichols. Mrs. Nichols is a native of Leake County in Mississippi. After earning a bachelor's degree from Alcorn State University in 1979, she began working as a paraprofessional at Carthage Elementary School. Later that year she began teaching secondary math at Velma Jackson High School.

In 1997, Mrs. Nichols was given the opportunity to earn a masters degree from Mississippi State University. Mrs. Nichols earned her masters in School Administration in 1999, where she went on to serve as principal of Amanda Elzy Elementary School and later East Elementary/Middle School.