

Navy and many others. Led by NOAA, the program supports government and university-based research to improve severe weather forecasts and better utilization by emergency managers as well as the public.

This legislation authorizes \$46.5 million over three years and emphasizes research on hurricanes and heavy precipitation events through better observations and modeling. Another important goal for the program will be to improve the communication between weather forecasters and the public and emergency managers when it is needed most. The bill also provides for the development of centers where research can be tested in real life environments to more quickly move research and new technology into operation—and save lives in the process.

I look forward to working with the agencies involved in this program, the research community, and my colleagues to pass this important legislation.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS  
TO MR. RICHARD BIOLSI

**HON. PATRICK J. TOOMEY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to offer congratulations and thanks to Mr. Richard Biolsi, Chief Operating Officer of KidsPeace, one of America's most comprehensive children's mental health charities which is headquartered in the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania.

Rich is retiring this year after 34 years of dedicated service to America's youth. Over that span, Rich has served as a social worker, Vice President for Programs, Executive Vice-President for Programs, interim Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Operating Officer for KidsPeace.

When he began his career with KidsPeace in 1969, the fledgling service organization was caring for only 35 children in a run-down home with very few resources. Now, 34 years later, KidsPeace directly cares for nearly 3,000 children at more than 50 centers across the country. What once was a single-home orphanage for children in the Lehigh Valley has become one of the most comprehensive children's mental health charities in the nation that has helped millions of children in every state of our nation, on overseas military bases, and in 70 foreign countries.

Many of these accomplishments, in no small part, can be attributed to Rich's efforts and strategic organizational leadership. From the development of six major residential campuses in four states, the establishment of the KidsPeace Hospital, and the creation of a unique and effective foster care program that provides homes for children in crisis in nine states, Rich has been an integral component of KidsPeace's success.

Rich's accomplishments extend well beyond the borders of KidsPeace. In 2001, he was named Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers. KidsPeace estimates that during his distinguished career, Rich and the programs he has created and overseen have directly cared for nearly 80,000 children in emotional crisis.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding dedication of Mr. Richard

Biolsi to America's most vulnerable children. His commitment to excellence has enriched the lives of each of the children he cared for. I offer congratulations on his outstanding career, and the thanks of a grateful nation.

TRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS  
OF 21 NORTHWEST MISSOURI  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements of 21 Northwest Missouri School Districts that have received the State's Distinction in Performance Award. The Distinction in Performance Award is designed to be an incentive for School Districts to focus on improving academic achievement. The criteria for the award, established by the State Board of Education, requires that the School Districts meet certain performance standards in the Missouri Assessment Program test scores, ACT test scores, attendance and dropout rates, and other academic performance records.

Of the 524 Public School Districts in the State of Missouri, 157 were given accolades for their achievements in 2002. Twenty-one School Districts in the 6th District were honored with this distinctive award and are as follows: Avenue City School District, Chillicothe School District, Cowgill School District, Galatin School District, Grundy County School District, Jefferson School District, Lathrop School District, Mound City School District, Mid-Buchanan School District, Nodaway-Holt School District, North Platte School District, Pattonsburg School District, Platte County School District, Rock Port School District, Savannah School District, South Harrison School District, Stanberry School District, Tri-County School District, West Platte County School District, Winston School District, and Worth County School District.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring these exceptional School Districts for their dedications to and achievement in educating the children of the 6th District.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO: LA PLATA  
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the La Plata County Sheriff's Office for their service and dedication during one of Colorado's most formidable fire seasons. Last summer, the LPCSO played an integral role in containing the Missionary Ridge forest fire that burned over 70,000 acres in Southwestern Colorado. Today, I would like to pay tribute to their heroic efforts before this body of Congress and this nation.

When the Missionary Ridge fire first erupted last June, the citizens of Durango, Bayfield and the surrounding communities called upon the La Plata County Sheriff's Office to protect

their loved ones, homes, and communities from what would become the worst fire in area history. The fire began in a ditch beside Missionary Ridge Road, just 15 miles northeast of Durango, and grew to consume more than 70,000 acres, 56 residences, and 27 out-buildings.

Although the Missionary Ridge fire was a devastating reminder of how destructive forest fires can be, it also served to remind us of the men and women who risk their lives to protect their fellow citizens on a daily basis. The roots of the La Plata County Sheriff's Office reach back to 1871, when Sheriff Joseph W. Wallace was solely responsible for law enforcement in the county. Today, the Sheriff's Office has 100 employees under the supervision of Sheriff Duke Schirard. During the Missionary Ridge Fire, the La Plata County Sheriff's Office turned their resources to numerous emergency activities that include alerting citizens and evacuating them from threatened roadways and properties, assisting the coordination of emergency services, and acting as real-time fire spotters. The LPCSO maintained traffic control for a 40-mile section along the fire's perimeter. Their personnel brought food and supplies to firefighters on the fire line and provided personnel to man checkpoints and fire lines. The over 2000 hours of overtime logged by the LPCSO illustrate the dedication and readiness with which these men and women serve the citizens of La Plata County.

Mr. Speaker, it is with sincere admiration that I recognize the La Plata County Sheriff's Office before this body of Congress and this nation. I want to commend all of the employees of the La Plata County Sheriff's Office for their determination, courage, and resolve during last summer's efforts on Missionary Ridge. Without the help of the La Plata County Sheriff's Office and others, the added devastation to our community, environment, and quality of life would have been unimaginable. Their tireless commitment throughout the summer's exhaustive fire season has served as an inspiration to us all, and it is an honor to represent such an outstanding group of Americans in this Congress.

TRIBUTE TO SURENKUMAR S.  
DESAI

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Surenkumar S. Desai of Madison County, Mississippi. Mr. Desai was serving as the Ward 3 Alderman in Canton, Mississippi at the time of his passing.

Mr. Desai immigrated to the United States from India in 1981, and was proud to be an American while still embracing his Indian heritage. In 1982, Mr. Desai moved to Mississippi and worked at a local drive-in restaurant. Two years later, he was transferred to the City of Canton to serve as the manager of another drive-in restaurant within the same chain.

Mr. Desai became an American citizen in 1992, and developed a keen interest in local politics thereafter. Mr. Desai campaigned several times serve as an elected official in the capacity of Mayor of Canton and Madison County District 1 Supervisory to no avail. However, his persistence paid off and in December

of 2001, Mr. Desai was finally elected to serve as Ward 3 Alderman of the City of Canton, Mississippi.

Many referred to and knew Mr. Desai merely as S.K. Mr. Desai was known as a hard working man that loved his job. He was regarded as a person who took great pride in being an elected public servant. Mr. Desai made a point to be present at City Hall everyday and make himself accessible to the citizens of Canton.

Mr. Desai is survived by his wife, two sons, and his parents.

---

HONORING LILLIAN WOOD FOR  
FIFTY YEARS OF DEDICATED  
SERVICE TO THE UNITED  
STATES MARINE CORPS

---

**HON. JOHN P. MURTHA**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me today to recognize an extraordinary Pennsylvanian who has dedicated herself to the service of her country for more than half a century.

Ms. Lillian Wood, born in East Millsboro, Pennsylvania, graduated from Brownsville High School in 1951. She began working as a civilian clerk-typist for the Marine Corps in February 1952. "Lil," as she is known to generations of Marines, quickly demonstrated a commitment and dedication and was recognized with a rapid series of promotions in several divisions within Headquarters, United States Marine Corps.

Based on her superb performance in support of the Personnel, Aviation, G-4, and Reserve Affairs divisions, Lil was selected as the Branch Supervisor for the newly created Special Correspondence Branch of the Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department in 1966. Lil was charged with supervision of 28 employees, both military and civilian, and was responsible for providing updates and responses to all Congressional inquiries into Marine Corps affairs.

"The Few and the Proud" is not just a recruiting slogan, and it applies as much to Marines in combat as to the civilian Marines who make it possible for them to deploy and come home safely. The success of Marines in battle throughout the history of our great nation is due, in no small measure, to the support they receive from civilian Marines and families back home.

Lil Wood stands as a shining example to all Marines, civilian Marines, and civil servants throughout the government. Lil and I both began our service to our country in 1952, both in the Marine Corps. Her accomplishments and fifty years of dedication to the Corps and to our country are remarkable and commendable. The Marine Corps is losing a valuable asset, and I offer Lil my best wishes for a well-deserved retirement.

CARE 21

**HON. NICK J. RAHALL II**

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation to restore our Nation's historic commitment to insuring lifetime health care for retired coal miners. Joining me in introducing this bill is the distinguished gentleman from Ohio, BOB NEY. Indeed, last year the House of Representatives passed the legislation we are reintroducing today. However, the other body did not take action on it prior to adjournment of the 107th Congress.

Enactment this year of CARE 21, the "Coal Accountability and Retired Employee Act for the 21st Century," is essential if we are to avoid seeing a curtailment in health care coverage for thousands of retired coal miners and their widows. This would not be the first time that Congress acted in this matter. In 1992, in what is known as the "Coal Act" enacted as part of the Energy Policy Act, Congress established the UMWA Combined Benefit Fund (CBF) combining the union's 1950 and 1974 benefit plans. This action came in response to changes in the coal industry which created a large class of "orphaned" miners whose benefits were no longer being paid by an active coal company. A key feature of the Coal Act was the financing of orphaned miner health care costs through an annual transfer of a portion of the interest which accrues to the unappropriated balance in the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.

Simply put, in restoring abandoned coal mine lands we must not abandon the retired coal miner.

The Coal Act has worked well with health care for retirees whose former employers could be identified financed by premiums paid by those companies while providing for a transfer of reclamation fund interest to finance orphaned miner care.

However, a barrage of litigation, adverse court decisions and skyrocketing health care costs is now threatening the financial integrity of the program. The result: Without a new source of funds, the CBF faces a deficit which if it continues could force curtailments in health care coverage for some 50,000 retirees and widows whose average age is 78.

CARE 21 takes a relatively simple and straightforward approach to addressing this impending crisis: It would lift the restriction in current law that reclamation fund interest can only be used for orphaned miner health care. Instead, it would allow interest transfers to be made for the purpose of offsetting any deficit in net assets in the CBF.

One of the key features of CARE 21 is that the general taxpayer is not being called upon to pay for retired coal miner health care, but rather, the coal industry itself would provide for this coverage through the interest which accrues to the fees it pays into the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I noted earlier there is a historical commitment to providing health care for retired coal miners. This is a unique situation in that what would normally be a matter solely for the private sector is not in this instance. The genesis for this situation dates back to 1946 in an agreement between then-UMW President John L. Lewis and the federal gov-

ernment to resolve a long-running labor dispute. At the time, President Truman had ordered the Interior Secretary to take possession of all bituminous coal mines in the country in an effort to break a United Mine Workers of America strike. Eventually, Lewis and Secretary Julius Krug reached an agreement that included an industry-wide, miner controlled health plan.

In fact, the 1992 Coal Act itself was formulated partly on the basis of recommendations from the Coal Commission, established by former Labor Secretary Libby Dole, which in 1990 recommended a statutory obligation to help finance the UMWA's Health Benefit Funds.

Mr. Speaker, the people covered by this health care program spent their careers producing the energy which powered this Nation to greatness. We must not forsake them. We must not cast them adrift in their later years, robbed of the health care they so desperately need.

---

PAYING TRIBUTE TO: KENT &  
LESLIE TAYLOR

---

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I rise today to pay tribute to Kent and Leslie Taylor, founders of the Texas Roadhouse. This family steakhouse restaurant chain remains very popular throughout this country for its great food and distinctive atmosphere. As Texas Roadhouse celebrates their tenth anniversary, I would like to recognize this milestone, and the Taylor's success before this body of Congress and this nation.

Kent and Leslie Taylor's success represents the entrepreneurial spirit of the American dream. Their persistence in forging an idea into a dream, and their commitment to that dream, is truly inspirational. Their product, market, customers, and most importantly, their employees, have all come together to create a winning formula. What began as a simple idea has now grown into an organization employing thousands. They have become an essential contributor to many communities throughout this country, and I would like to commend them for their outstanding success.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Kent and Leslie Taylor before this body of Congress and this nation for their enduring commitment to realizing the American dream. Businesses like these are the backbone of our economy and the heart of our neighborhoods. The Taylor's dream has become a successful and enduring enterprise, and I wish all the best to Kent and Leslie in all of their future endeavors.

---

REGARDING THE DEATH OF HELMUT "BROWNIE" BRAUNSTEINER

---

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 8, 2003*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, December 29th, Pierce County,