

to assisting others was unparalleled, and she will be sorely missed.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DUNBAR
HIGH SCHOOL AND COACH ROBERT
HUGHES ON 5-A BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize and congratulate the remarkable Dunbar High School boys basketball team and their legendary coach Robert Hughes for winning the 2003 Texas Division 4-A championship.

Throughout the championship tournament, sports fans across Texas eagerly followed the Dunbar team to see if Coach Hughes would win his fifth state championship just weeks after setting the national record for the most wins by a high school basketball coach. An outstanding group of student athletes from Fort Worth made sure we weren't disappointed.

The championship game pitted Dunbar, the top seed, against No. 2 seed Oxen High School. Led by outstanding play from Jeremis Smith, Lance Jackson, Dominique Williams, Jeff Muriel and other Wildcats, Dunbar came from behind to win the second championship in Dunbar's school history.

With the excitement of the tournament behind us, talk is turning to whether Coach Hughes will return for his 46th season of coaching. The Dunbar players, many of whom are returning next season and who desperately want to play for the title again in Austin, have made it very clear that they want Coach Hughes back on the bench. And all of us who greatly admire everything Coach Hughes has accomplished on the court and to help countless young peoples' lives also hope to see him back next year.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, on March 18, 2003, during rollcall vote No. 65 on H. Con. Res. 26 I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

INTRODUCING THE AVIATION INDUSTRY
STABILIZATION ACT OF
2003

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced the "Aviation Industry Stabilization Act." The bill addresses the burdens placed

on the industry by the terrorist attacks on September 11, the increased security required in response to the attacks, and additional burdens the industry will face if there is a war with Iraq.

Although the events of September 11 were directed at our Nation as a whole, the airlines were used as the weapons of attack and, as a result, have incurred a disproportionate share of the costs of the attack.

The effects of September 11 on the aviation industry were direct and far-reaching. Commercial airliners were totally grounded for several days and realized no revenues while incurring hundreds of millions of dollars in expenses. Even after the industry resumed flying, passenger traffic has not fully recovered because of public anxiety that the airlines could again become a weapon for terrorists. The events of September 11 have also added to the industry's expenses, including a billion dollars a year in increased insurance costs, and loss of substantial revenues because of security limitations on the carriage of freight and mail. In addition, we have required increased security for the aviation system after September 11. Although it was our intent that the general public pay most of these added costs, and that the new Transportation Security Administration take over many security functions, we have not fully compensated the airlines for the added costs involved in functions they continue to perform, such as screening catering facilities, checking documents, screening passengers and persons with access to aircraft, and cockpit door retrofit.

The costs of a war with Iraq will also fall disproportionately on the airlines. A war with Iraq is likely to add substantially to the industry's financial distress, including increased fuel costs (fuel is approximately 15 percent of the airlines' total costs), loss of revenue from the reluctance of passengers to fly—especially in the trans-Atlantic service—and the need of our military to use the airlines' aircraft to carry troops and equipment to the war zone.

Shortly after September 11, Congress responded to the aviation industry's financial problems by passing a \$15 billion package of direct assistance and loans. Even with this assistance, the Air Transport Association (ATA) states that passenger carriers reported over \$10 billion in 2002 net losses. ATA forecasts \$6.7 billion in net losses of 2003 if the United States does not go to war with Iraq. However, if the United States does go to war with Iraq, ATA forecasts that airline net losses for 2003 will be \$10.7 billion to \$13 billion.

The costs of September 11 have fallen not only on airline creditors and stockholders, but also on their employees. Airline workers have suffered unprecedented job loss and economic uncertainty. Some 100,000 airline employees are out of work or facing imminent lay-off. The ATA forecasts another 70,000 layoffs if there is a war with Iraq. And, with two major airlines in bankruptcy, and more likely to follow, the staggering job losses may grow.

Mr. Speaker, we must act now to stem the tremendous costs of September 11 that are continuing to be imposed on the airlines and their hard-working employees, and the even greater costs and revenue losses that are likely once the war with Iraq commences. The airlines have already shouldered, and are con-

tinuing to shoulder a disproportionate share of the costs of September 11. We must not force them to bear a disproportionate share of the direct and indirect costs of a war with Iraq. We must act now to provide airlines with stable, low cost war risk insurance from the federal government, relief from security burdens that are the responsibility of the entire country, and assistance in coping with any major increase in fuel costs and any loss of traffic, resulting from a war with Iraq.

Specifically, my bill provides:

WAR RISK INSURANCE

A permanent limitation on airline liability for third party damages (i.e. injuries to people in a building or on the ground) from acts of terrorism to \$100 million, and extends existing war risk policies until December 31, 2007 at premiums no higher than now.

FUEL PRICES

Loan Guarantees: Reopens the federal loan program established by the Air Transportation and System Stabilization Act (Pub. L. 107-42) and dedicates \$3 billion of the \$10 billion program to federal guarantees for loans or for lines of credit, or direct lines of credit for carriers to purchase fuel. In other words, the program authorizes ATSB to issue a loan guarantee, or issue a line of credit directly to carrier or to guarantee a line of credit issued to a carrier by a third party.

Strategic Petroleum Reserve: Requires the Secretary of Energy to draw down not less than 500,000 barrels per day of petroleum from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to offset dislocation or price spikes in the jet fuel market due to a possible war with Iraq.

AIR CARRIER REIMBURSEMENT

Air Traffic Losses: Authorizes the Department of Transportation to reimburse, subject to appropriations, an air carrier for any financial losses that the DOT determines are attributable to the loss of air traffic due to a war with Iraq.

Security-Related Activities: Directs the TSA, within available resources, to reimburse air carriers and airports for screening related activities they are still performing, such as catering, document checks, and screening of passengers and persons having access to aircraft. In addition, directs the TSA to reimburse such entities for the provision of space. The bill also directs the TSA to reimburse air carriers for the costs of strengthening cockpit doors.

Civil Reserve Air Fleet: Ensures that air carriers participating in the civil reserve air fleet program are compensated for positioning, de-positioning, and other ferry portions of such missions. During the gulf war, many air carriers performing CRAF missions lost revenue from the lack of return flight traffic.

Mr. Speaker, my bill recognizes the ongoing plight of the aviation industry, for the costs imposed upon them by the terrorist attacks of September 11, the increased security necessitated by the attack, and the likely war with Iraq. National security is the responsibility of the entire nation; disproportionment costs should not be imposed on the industry that happens to be the means of terrorist attacks.

I urge my colleagues to join me in working to pass this important legislation.

HELP EFFICIENT, ACCESSIBLE,
LOW-COST, TIMELY HEALTHCARE
(HEALTH) ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2003

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5, the Republican medical malpractice bill, and the process by which it is being debated in this House.

Today, the House will pass H.R. 5, a bill to impose caps on damages that may be awarded for medical malpractice, defective products, and other health related wrongdoings. Like many Members of this House, I am concerned about the rising cost of medical malpractice insurance and its impact on physicians and their patients, but H.R. 5 is not the right medicine for this national problem.

I oppose H.R. 5 because it will not reduce medical malpractice premiums. What's more, it protects manufacturers of defective pharmaceutical and medical equipment from product liability actions, and overturns North Carolina state law.

Years of experience prove that limiting patient rights to seek legal remedies for medical malpractice will not reduce insurance rates for doctors or hospitals. We've heard a lot of debate on this floor today about California's law that caps damage awards in medical malpractice cases at \$250,000. Supporters of H.R. 5 misses the point in this debate, Mr. Speaker. Instead of dealing with the real issue here, which involves insurance rates, the Republican Majority is turning this serious issue into a political football at the expense of patients.

H.R. 5 also limits the ability of injured persons to bring suits against pharmaceutical companies, HMOs, nursing homes, and medical device manufacturers, thus setting a dangerous precedent allowing these entities to escape the law in even the most severe cases of neglect and abuse.

Finally, H.R. 5 undermines North Carolina's patients protection statutes, which are some of the strongest in the nation.

My colleagues Mr. DINGELL and Mr. CONYERS have drafted an alternative amendment to H.R. 5. This alternative will help courts weed out frivolous lawsuits without restricting the rights of legitimate claims, repeal the federal anti-trust exemption for medical malpractice insurance companies, thereby increasing competition and lowering premiums, and provide targeted assistance directly to physicians, hospitals, and communities in medical malpractice crisis areas. Finally, the alternative establishes an independent advisory commission to examine and recommend long-term solutions to this important issue. Unfortunately, the Republican Leadership has denied us an opportunity to offer this alternative.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of an insurance is an important one. Yet, it seems that the Republican Majority has forgotten one of the key tenets of the Hippocratic oath—do no harm or injustice. H.R. 5 will without a doubt harm America's patients. I urge all of my colleagues to vote against H.R. 5 and to support the motion to recommit the bill.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. ANNIE MAE
AARON ON HER 95TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to recognize Mrs. Annie Mae Aaron who will soon observe her 95th birthday.

Born on April 24, 1908, Mrs. Aaron was aware at an early age of the importance family, faith, freedom, and education. Though she was struck with polio at the age of three, through her faith in God, and self-reliance, she recovered from this illness to lead a full and productive life of distinction. She Attended Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Florida and graduated in the class of 1930. She was a teacher in the public school system of Florida, teaching in E.O. Douglas high school in Sebring.

In 1939, Mrs. Aaron made her home in West Palm Beach Florida where she was the Sunday school secretary at Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church. She was a marketing representative for the Afro American Insurance Company. She married J.E. Aaron of Sebring in 1941 and they enjoyed a long happy union until his death in 1974.

Mrs. Aaron's greatest contribution to her community and to her country is through her family—her children that she reared—and pre-school age children of others whom she mentored. She produced seven sons and two daughters. Four of her sons served honorably in the United States Army, three of whom served in combat zones during hostilities. Rudy rose to the rank of Sergeant and served in the Army Signal Corps in the Korean War. Samuel achieved to the rank of Regular Army Major and was an Army aviator during two tours in the Vietnam War. He is a high-ranking official with the Federal Aviation Administration. A third son, Eugene, advanced to the rank of Regular Army Captain and served in Wurzburg, Germany with the Third Infantry Division as a Tank platoon commander during the height of the Cold War. He was also an advisory to South Vietnamese in the Vietnam War. He is now a State Department Foreign Service Officer, who has completed diplomatic assignments in four countries. Patrick served in the United States Army in Alaska in the Signal Corps, Mrs. Aaron's daughters are also serving their communities in significant ways. Both have chosen to become teachers in their native Florida, following in the large footprints of their mother. Priscilla is a Business teacher at Sebring High School in Highlands County. Ruth is a Mathematics Instructor in the Seminole County Community College.

Some sons have distinguished themselves in non-military areas as well. Joseph is an expert chemist and enjoyed a long 20-year career with the Department of Energy. James is a passionate lawyer, using his knowledge and skill of the law to increase justice in his community. During his life, Robert used his hands in many trades, mainly the construction crafts. Lastly, one of the children that she mentored as a pre-school student, Water, is a Medical Doctor. Indeed Mrs. Aaron has contributed much to Sebring, the state of Florida and America.

In addition to organizing and serving as president of the Women's Club, a community

service organization, Mrs. Aaron was an advisor to the Girl Scouts. She is still a vibrant presence in Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church in Sebring, Florida. Mrs. Aaron's life is the very model of what is possible in a free and open democratic society and it is in keeping with the culture and highest traditions of what it means to be an American. Mr. Speaker I know that my colleagues here in the U.S. House of Representatives join me today in saluting Mrs. Aaron and wishing her continued health and happiness in the years to come.

CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING THE EDUCATIONAL
VALUE OF STUDENT TRAVEL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, whereas travel is a vital component of the educational experience for Americans of all ages;

Whereas, the Washington, DC area is an area rich in American history and is visited by students nationwide;

Whereas many school boards across the country are reluctant to approve student trips to Washington, DC and other historic areas due to the attack on the World Trade Center, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania and the fear of additional attacks;

Whereas many U.S. students will not be able to experience landmarks and monuments celebrating American democracy, political figures and scientific achievement;

Whereas the absence of student travel to our nation's historic sites will leave a vital gap in the education of America's youth;

Whereas America's youth must be cognizant of American history to understand fully the concepts and responsibilities of democracy and citizenship;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate and the United States House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, that student travel is a vital component of the educational process and should be encouraged so that Americans, young and old, can participate in travel, the perfect freedom.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR TONI
JENNINGS

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker I rise today to congratulate Florida's new Lieutenant Governor, Toni Jennings, who was appointed Monday by Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

I served with Toni in the Florida State Senate and I know from working with her in that capacity what a dedicated public servant she is.

A Florida native and the first woman to hold this post in Florida's history, Toni brings a wealth of legislative knowledge and dedication to the State of Florida with her to the Executive Branch.

Toni was the youngest woman ever elected to the State Legislature when she took office