

HONORING EDITH PALMER ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT FROM THE SPRINGVILLE LEAGUE FOR THE HANDICAPPED

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2003

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor a remarkable and devoted individual. Tomorrow, Edith Palmer will be honored by her community on the occasion of her retirement from the Springville League for the Handicapped and Preschool Learning Center.

For 43 years, Edie has been the heart and soul of a facility that has given new hope to parents and new opportunities for the more than 160 preschool children who come through its doors each year. I know that not only because Edie lives in my hometown, but also because I am one of those parents.

In May, 1960, Edie answered a newspaper ad calling together parents of disabled children to meet and discuss the special educational needs of their children. These concerned parents first met under a tree on East Avenue, where they planted the seeds for what has become one of the premiere educational facilities for handicapped and learning disabled children in all of New York state.

Edie's devotion to the Springville League for the Handicapped began from her own experience as the parent of a hearing disabled son. Like other parents of handicapped children in the 1950's, Edie felt, as she said in her own words, "adrift on the ocean with no help on the horizon."

That first day, Edie volunteered to handle all the group's secretarial work, and later that year became Board Secretary for their volunteer board of directors—a post she would hold for 20 years. For its first dozen years, the League provided volunteer help for children, using donated space, volunteer staff and providing help to children at no cost to their parents.

Thanks, in part, to Edie's leadership, dedication and passion, the Springville League for the Handicapped and Preschool Center opened the doors of its own facility in 1987; and today employs 95 people, serving 160 disabled preschool children each year. Earlier this year, Edie Palmer was named the Springville Chamber of Commerce "Citizen of the Year," an honor well deserved.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Congress join me in saluting Edie Palmer for her 43 years of service to the Springville League for the Handicapped and Preschool Learning Center. As a parent, I can personally attest to the tremendous difference that she has made in the lives of children and families in Western New York, and I am proud and grateful to be able to call her my friend.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013:

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution. I would like to thank the gentleman from Iowa for his hard work on the budget resolution. Over the last several days, I've met with House Leadership to voice my concerns with this resolution. Although this budget does not have everything in it I am requesting, it is showing considerable momentum in the right direction.

Most Americans agree that the federal government must tighten its fiscal belt. This budget controls federal spending, while also ensuring that priority items are adequately funded. This budget protects the Medicare program while also beginning the process of reforming the system. This budget also provides \$400 billion over ten years to provide a prescription drug benefit. I strongly support this funding, and I will continue to work for a Medicare prescription drug benefit for Pennsylvania's seniors.

This budget protects our veterans. Although earlier drafts of this resolution provided lower levels of veterans' funding than in the President's fiscal year 2004 Budget, I strongly advocated the need for higher levels in my discussions with Leadership and the Committee. This resolution matches the President's proposed 6.1 percent increase in veterans' discretionary spending over fiscal year 2003, and a 7.5 percent increase in mandatory outlays. I would like to thank the Chairman for his commitment to veterans, and for promising to support even higher levels of funding during conference negotiations.

I have met with numerous veterans in my district and across Pennsylvania. Let me reassure those who served our country that I will continue to support stronger funding for veterans, especially in the area of health benefits. More needs to be done. For example, wait times for veterans seeking medical care remain much too long. But this budget is not the end of the road on veterans' funding, and, as the only Pennsylvania Member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I will continue to work on this.

That Committee and several veterans' groups are working together to identify waste, fraud and abuse to ensure that the VA is using its resources efficiently. For example, the VA Inspector General has identified more than 5,500 cases of individuals who may be defrauding the VA by receiving benefits intended for veterans who have died. The VA has recovered \$4.7 million from these cases. We must also update and improve purchasing procedures such as for medical supplies and prescription drugs. Every dollar wasted, every

penny stolen through fraud or abuse is money robbed from veterans—and none of us will tolerate this.

I also support this budget's call to cut one cent on the dollar from other federal agencies by reducing fraud, waste, and abuse. I believe we can find these savings and, as a taxpayer, I believe we are obligated to try. We must ensure, down to the last penny, that every tax dollar is spent wisely and efficiently.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of protecting Medicare, providing funds for a Medicare prescription drug benefit, and increasing spending on veterans' health care needs.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 1462, THE INTERNATIONAL DISABILITIES AND VICTIMS OF WARFARE AND CIVIL STRIFE ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R. 1462, the International Disabilities and Victims of Warfare and Civil Strife Assistance Act of 2003. Mr. Speaker, as we speak thousands of young men and women in our Armed Forces are beginning the long process of transforming Iraq and the entire Middle East by risking their lives in the desert plains before Baghdad. These brave members of our Armed Forces are facing many threats—threats from Iraqi's Fedayeen, who violate international humanitarian law by pretending to surrender and then attacking our troops, from weapons of mass destruction and from landmines. Mr. Speaker, I understand that already many of our casualties are related to these devices or have injuries similar to those inflicted by these weapons.

The bill I am introducing today is intended to help those who face identical injuries. The suffering of individuals with disabilities and the innocent victims of landmines, civil strife and warfare—men, women and children who often lead shattered lives—transcends any politics. An often-difficult life in the developing world is instantly made nearly impossible, for example, as a landmine indiscriminately transforms a productive member of a village, an irreplaceable provider for a family, a child hoping for a better life, a young woman looking forward to marriage and children, into a crippled, demoralized person who is often shunned as a liability by his or her society. Persons with disabilities—either from birth, accidents, civil strife or other means—are marginalized, often without any hope of leading useful and productive lives.

The United States provides some assistance for rehabilitation and societal reintegration of individuals suffering from disabilities and landmine victims, but so much more needs to be done; currently, only about 10 percent of U.S. assistance to address the landmine problem actually helps survivors.

The International Disabilities and Victims of Warfare and Civil Strife Assistance Act of 2003 grants the President new statutory authority to conduct international disability and landmine victim programs, primarily through private organizations; authorizes and coordinates related activities of appropriate U.S. agencies; and authorizes increased funding

levels for such programs. Let me make one additional point, Mr. Speaker, this bill is not about questions regarding the ban on landmines. It is simply a humanitarian measure designed to help the innocent men, women

and children who face disabilities throughout their lives.

I want to thank my cosponsor and cochairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, my good friend from Virginia, FRANK WOLF for making this bipartisan legislation, as

well as the Senate cosponsors, Senator SAM BROWNBACK and Senator HILLARY CLINTON, who have been leaders in this area.

I urge swift consideration and enactment of this legislation.