

regional Bells. This is not a sustainable economic model, as we are now witnessing.

Recently, the Federal Communications Commission had the opportunity to turn things around in their Triennial Review. They failed to do so.

Instead of correcting the rate structure and creating the regulatory certainty necessary to stabilize the industry, the FCC managed to produce even more uncertainty by punting to the states the rate decision they were supposed to establish. This means that the rate structure for local telephone service will now have to go through lengthy legal battles in 50 different states and in the District of Columbia before it is resolved. Unless something is done, for years to come, lawyers will profit and the status quo will prevail.

I urge the FCC to reconsider its decision. You cannot fool an industry into recovery by creating a façade of competition.

HONORING THE WINNER OF THE
2003 VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
BROADCAST SCRIPTWRITING
CONTEST, "FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION"

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Darshan N. Patel, a National winner of the 2003 Voice of Democracy Program. The contest theme this year was "Freedom's Obligation."

Mr. Patel is a sophomore at Albuquerque Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I think you will agree that his entry earned the award. Mr. Patel has communicated a powerful message regarding "Freedom's Obligation." I submit his winning entry for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to honor Darshan's tribute to the American men and women of the military who have given us the many freedoms we enjoy today.

Mr. Speaker, I also extend my appreciation to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for their sponsorship of this program. This year more than 80,000 secondary school students participated in this contest competing for the 59 national scholarships. Darshan was sponsored by VFW Post 401 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Darshan Patel as a National winner and thanking him for his patriotism.

ENSURE ACCESS TO CRITICAL
DIALYSIS CARE UNDER MEDICARE

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, today Congressman CAMP and I are introducing legislation, the Medicare Renal Dialysis Payment Fairness Act of 2003, which would require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to create and implement by January 2004 an annual updating mechanism for dialysis reimbursement under Medicare.

While the Medicare program pays for about 75 percent of dialysis care, there is currently no mechanism to update the reimbursement to account for inflation, new technology, labor, and other cost increases. In fact, the dialysis reimbursement is the only Medicare prospective payment system that does not have an updating framework. As a result, in their March 2003 Report to Congress, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) states that Medicare is on average paying three percent less than the cost of a dialysis treatment. This payment disparity is even greater for small and rural dialysis facilities, which experience about an 11 percent payment shortfall per treatment.

A primary concern about this underfunding is the inability of dialysis facilities to compete with other providers—who do receive annual updates—for nurses and other health care workers. According to a study completed by Abt Associates, a dialysis center in Baltimore, Maryland is only able to pay \$25.75 per hour while the local hospital has the resources to pay \$35.00 per hour. Similarly, in northern California, a dialysis center pays staff \$32.00 per hour while the hospital pays \$40 per hour.

Across the nation, nursing salaries have increased an average of 27 percent (from \$23,140 to \$31,720) from 1992 to 2002. It has become more and more difficult for the renal community to keep up with these rising labor costs and recruit and retain trained staff for dialysis facilities when other providers have the capabilities to pay higher salaries.

Even more importantly, reports show that low reimbursement rates have started to create access to care problems for Medicare end stage renal disease (ESRD) patients. In 2001, on average 77 percent of patients treated at renal facilities were Medicare beneficiaries. However, among the dialysis facilities that closed in 2001, Medicare beneficiaries comprised 88 percent of patients. This evidence indicates the economic challenge that dialysis centers face in treating Medicare beneficiaries.

I am pleased that this legislation is supported by the Renal Leadership Council and the National Kidney Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, providing for an inflationary annual update would allow the Secretary of HHS to make appropriate, data-driven decisions each year on fair dialysis payment rates. We must ensure that dialysis care for Medicare beneficiaries is not jeopardized due to inadequate reimbursement. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor and support this important legislation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MAURA
LYLE LASATER

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Maura Lyle Lasater of Las Vegas, NV, Nevada's 2003 Cherry Blossom Princess and dear friend of mine.

I have known Maura since she was a youngster. I have watched her grow from an energetic toddler, through her competitive ice skating and horseback riding years as a young girl, high school at Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, college at the University

of Puget Sound graduating with a Communications degree, all the way to the intelligent, poised and personable young woman with a great sense of humor she is today. Maura was an active and valuable participant in her mother's two successful Las Vegas mayoral races and also her run at the Nevada governorship.

Maura is now a trusted and valuable member of my staff. Her first day at work was September 11, 2001. Reporting to work at 9 a.m. that morning, new to this city and without a network of friends, within less than 45 minutes America and the world changed and Maura's own personal world became even more unsettled. My staff, rallying together in the face of their own unknown terror, embraced "the new girl" and kept her with them as they sought and found a safe place to wait out the day's events. In the chaotic days following 9/11—including the anthrax scare—Maura established herself as a tireless, reliable and dedicated public servant, despite her short time on the Hill.

Much has transpired since that day and Maura now is an experienced and knowledgeable Hill veteran, much loved and respected by her colleagues. She has her own network of friends and has continued her volunteer efforts on behalf of candidates and causes. Maura is an excellent representative of her home State of Nevada in the Cherry Blossom Festival.

The story of the Cherry Blossoms has been told many times—the Japanese Government, working with then First Lady Helen Taft, donated 2000 cherry blossom trees. When they arrived, they were found to be diseased and unfortunately had to be destroyed to prevent the spread of the disease to our own agricultural products. The Japanese Government was gracious enough to provide another donation—this time 3000 gorgeous cherry blossom trees. These were planted not only in the Tidal Basin, but all throughout Washington, DC. There are now less than 200 of the original trees remaining, and efforts are underway through new research and cuttings to regrow these trees so there will always be descendants of Japan's gracious gift to America. Maura and the other Cherry Blossom Princesses are an integral part of this time-honored tradition fostering continued good will of our two countries and the beauty the trees provide.

Maura spent a whirlwind week of customs and ceremonies as Nevada's representative to the Cherry Blossom Festival. I was filled with pride when I escorted her in the introduction ceremony at the Congressional Reception, attended by the Ambassador of Japan and Mrs. Ryozo Kato. Las Vegas and all Nevadans can be proud to have Maura Lasater as their representative. I look forward to Maura's continued success in life and wish her all the best as she pursues her dreams and goals.

HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY
OF MARY LOU DAVIDSON

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a happy 100th birthday to a dear cousin of mine, Mary Lou Gordon Davidson. She is a

remarkable woman who continues to remain an active and vibrant part of her community.

Mrs. Davidson was born April 29, 1903, to the late Dr. Alfred Nelson Gordon and Sallie Holden Gordon on a farm in my hometown community of Rutherford County, TN. She has lived through 18 U.S. presidents and has witnessed a dizzying array of technological achievements, including traveling to town by horse and buggy to reaching the stars by way of powerful rockets. She has watched telecommunications advance from a simple hand-crank telephone hanging on the wall to a hand-held digital telephone using signals delivered by way of satellite.

After receiving her bachelor's degree from the old Tennessee College for Women in my hometown of Murfreesboro, Mrs. Davidson raised a child, Sara, and taught school for more than four decades before retiring in 1968. Through her active life, Mrs. Davidson enjoyed a multitude of hobbies, including gardening, cooking and sewing. In fact, she currently leads a knitting class at her home in the McKendree Retirement Village. And she has won nearly a dozen gold medals while participating in the Senior Olympics.

Mrs. Davidson is the epitome of living life to the fullest. Her keen wit and positive attitude have given her a wonderful disposition, one that we should wish to have. I congratulate Mrs. Davidson for her countless contributions to her community and her country.

TRIBUTE TO PHILLIP BURTON

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I want to commemorate the life of the late Congressman Phil Burton, who in my humble opinion was one of the greatest and most brilliant legislators in modern times.

Those of us who had the privilege of working with Phil Burton can certainly attest to his unique and outstanding leadership capabilities and his tremendous influence still being felt today. No doubt we all have our Phi Burton stories to tell, most of which center around the life and times of a man who is one of the great legislative giants of our times.

Twenty years ago, over 125 Members of Congress, including House Speaker "Tip" O'Neill, traveled to San Francisco to attend a special memorial service in honor of Phil Burton. It was one of the largest delegations of Members, perhaps even the largest, to attend a memorial service of one of its own colleagues.

I remember former California Assembly Speaker and now Mayor of San Francisco, Mayor Willie Brown, a close personal friend and associate of Phil Burton, made an interesting observation of Phil's life and career. Mayor Brown said, "Now I know some of you Members of Congress are here to pay your respects and truly offer your sympathies to Sala (Phil's wife) and the family. But I also sense that some of you are here to be absolutely certain that Phil Burton is dead and to be sure that you will never have to confront him again."

At the memorial service, House Speaker Tip O'Neill also made this comment concerning

Phil Burton. He said, "Few in the House of the past or in the present can match his contribution." "Phil had his losses, but he always shoved adversity aside. He fought for the hungry and the sick and against bigotry with tremendous energy and commitment."

Some people describe Phil Burton as an ultra-liberal and very difficult to work with because of his so-called ideology. But I considered Phil a very unique kind of liberal, one who was able to foster relationships with other Members, despite differences in ideologies. It was not uncommon to find Phil in a corner of this chamber talking to a conservative Republican or conservative Democrat. I remember well one of Phil's famous proverbial expressions, "Cut the B.S. and let's be operational."

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues are well aware, one of the most ideologically-based committees in this institution is the Committee on Resources. A committee composed mainly of Members from Western states, whose districts are significantly affected by the involvement of the Federal Government regarding the control and administration of millions of acres of land which are located in these states.

Recognizing the atmosphere that existed in the Committee, I once asked former Congressman Sam Steiger, a senior Republican from Arizona, how he was able to get along with a liberal like Phil. Congressman Steiger replied, "Two things Eni. First, Phil is among the few liberals who at least comes and talks to us on this side of the aisle, and second, in all the years that I've known and worked with him, Phil Burton has never broken a promise." Mr. Speaker, Phil Burton was a man of his word.

Long before I knew that I was going to be a member of this great institution, I served as a member of Phil's staff. From him I learned a lesson that I have carried with me ever since. "Eni," he told me, "the only thing that matters and is worth anything working in this place—is your word. Don't ever forget that."

Mr. Speaker, I haven't forgotten this lesson, and the many others I learned from Phil. He was a man of principle, conviction and determination. A man who left behind a legacy of integrity. A man who was my mentor and friend.

TRIBUTE TO PULITZER PRIZE WINNING BOSTON GLOBE

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Boston Globe on their Pulitzer Prize for public service, journalism's highest honor, for their coverage of the clergy abuse scandal in Boston. They are to be commended for their outstanding and comprehensive reporting.

In January of last year the Globe ran a Spotlight series, which showed a widespread pattern of sexual abuse by priests, covered up by the Archdiocese of Boston. Throughout the year, a team of reporters, including Spotlight reporters Walter V. Robinson, Matthew Carroll, Sacha Pfeiffer, and Michael Rezendes; investigative reporters Kevin Cullen, Thomas Farragher, and Stephen Kurkjian; and religion reporter Michael Paulson, managed by editors

Ben Bradlee Jr. and Mark S. Morrow, produced nearly 800 stories related to the scandal.

The Globe executed courageous and timely reporting and coverage of the scandal. They reached a level of reporting and coverage unparalleled in recent times in its depth and force of reporting. As a result of their coverage, the scandal received international attention, and culminated with the resignation of Cardinal Bernard F. Law in December.

At a time when we need public servants, and we call on our citizens to offer their services to our communities and to our country, the Globe proved that newspapers too can rise to the challenge and provide an incredible public service. There is no doubt that the thousands of families, who found a voice through the pages of the newspaper's coverage of this scandal, are far better off for the Globe's work. We all owe them our thanks and a debt of gratitude for their service.

FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION BY KACEY L. REYNOLDS

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a young lady in my District, Ms. Kacey L. Reynolds of Calvert City, Kentucky. Ms. Reynolds is the Kentucky winner of the 2003 Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy broadcast script writing contest. Ms. Reynolds's script, entitled "Freedom's Obligation," has great meaning as our armed forces are in the process of liberating the Iraqi people and giving them the freedoms we enjoy everyday. At sixteen years old, Ms. Reynolds has a true understanding of what freedom means and what individuals must do to preserve it. I have attached a copy of Ms. Reynolds's script to be placed in the RECORD. I urge all my colleagues to read her inspiring thoughts on the true value of freedom.

[From the 2002-2003 VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Contest]

FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION

(By Kacey Reynolds—Kentucky Winner)

Our forefathers viewed freedom as a quest—a goal they lived, and gave, their lives fearlessly pursuing. Today, most of us view freedom as a privilege we deserve, a complimentary right owed to us, simply because we are American. But our liberty must never be taken for granted and we must never delude ourselves into believing freedom is free. Independence has always come at a price, and we have a responsibility to ensure that it continues so the heroic sacrifices made to secure it were not in vain. Freedom is a blessing and a responsibility and our obligation to it is threefold.

Our first obligation to freedom is that of education. Thomas Jefferson once said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant AND free, in a state of civilization, then it expects what never was and never will be." Ignorance is the first enemy of liberty. It is through education that we possess the freedom, not only to provide for ourselves, but to choose the manner in which we do so. It is through learning that we open our minds to new concepts and courageous ideals to better govern ourselves. It is through a knowledge of our history that we take pride in who we are and our rich heritage as Americans. Education