

TIME IS NOT ON OUR SIDE

HON. RICHARD BURR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, on February 20, 2003, the Federal Communications Commission agreed to change its rules to make it easier for telephone companies to deploy broadband facilities. It is now May, and the FCC has yet to issue the actual rules from that decision.

On February 20, Washington, DC was still digging out from a major snowstorm, and most area schools were still closed. By the time the FCC issues its order, Washington weather will probably be that lovely mix of high humidity and 90 degree heat. When the FCC voted on February 20, we were wearing our heavy winter coats and snow boots. By the time the order is issued, we will be wearing seersucker suits and white shoes.

On February 20, Major League Baseball players were just beginning to gather in Florida and Arizona for spring training. Since then, spring training has been completed, rosters have been finalized, and about 20 percent of the season has been played.

On February 20, U.S. forces were amassing in the Persian Gulf Region. Since then, our troops have rolled through Iraq and ousted Saddam. Clearly, it takes the U.S. military less time to dethrone a vicious dictator than it takes the FCC to write the rules for an order it already agreed upon.

How long do you think these past two-and-a-half months have been for those workers and families of workers laid off in the telecommunications industry? How many more workers lost their jobs in that time? How many who were laid off could have been put back to work?

One thing is clear, broadband deployment will not start in earnest until the FCC sets the right policy rules. That has to start now by issuing the rules agreed upon back in February.

TRIBUTE TO SHELBY CRAWFORD
OF EUREKA SPRINGS

HON. JOHN BOOZMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and honor a young Arkansas student from my district who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in her community. Shelby Crawford of Eureka Springs has just been named one of the top youth volunteers by The 2003 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Ms. Crawford is being recognized for organizing a petting zoo event that raised more than \$1000 for a local horse rescue center.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their

communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contribution this young citizen has made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Ms. Crawford are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought this young role model to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued, and to inspire other young people to follow their example. Over the past eight years, the program has become the Nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, with nearly 150,000 youngsters participating since its inception.

Ms. Crawford should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. I heartily applaud Ms. Crawford for her initiative in seeking to make her community a better place to live, and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

VETERANS COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH CARE AND ACCESS TO
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced legislation to address a major obstacle our nation's veterans face in obtaining comprehensive health care and access to prescription drugs.

According to the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA pharmacy benefit is the primary reason that veterans without service-connected disabilities use VA healthcare services. Nearly 90 percent of these veterans have access to private health care and private physicians, yet they wait in lengthy lines at the VA in order to be re-examined and re-tested so they can receive their prescription drugs through the VA. This causes veterans with a prescription already in hand to wait weeks, even months before it is filled and creates a backlog of veterans waiting for doctor appointments.

My legislation would ease the process by which veterans with private health insurance or Medicare coverage obtain prescription drugs through the VA healthcare system. Specifically, it would allow an eligible veteran, with a prescription written by a private physician, to fill that prescription at a VA pharmacy from the

current VA formulary. My legislation differs from other prescription drug access proposals because it specifically limits the prescriptions to drugs listed under the VA formulary in order to limit the cost of implementation. Under current law, the VA does not have the authority to dispense prescriptions written by private sector physicians.

As chairman of the Ways & Means health subcommittee, I recognize the unique challenge that the VA faces in its mission to provide comprehensive quality health care service to veterans. However, strict adherence to that same mission has resulted in lengthy delays in the delivery of quality care to both veterans with private health coverage and those veterans that are entirely dependent on the VA as their healthcare provider.

In order to ensure timely delivery of health care, the VA must focus on the barriers veterans face in receiving care including streamlining access to prescription drugs.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOLENE
HYATT

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege today to recognize an outstanding educator from my district. Jolene Hyatt of La Junta, Colorado is my state's nominee for the 2003 National Education Association Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. Her fellow teachers nominated her not only for her skill in the classroom but also for her professional leadership and involvement in the community.

Jolene has taught kindergarten in La Junta since 1975. She is a lifelong learner and advocate for education. Her dedication to her profession, her students, and her community is extraordinary. Jolene has served selflessly on a number of educational committees and organizations and is the past president of the La Junta Education Association. She currently contributes as a member of the La Junta Education Association's negotiations committee and is a member of the school improvement committee. She has been named to Who's Who Among American Teachers and is a recipient of the Heart of Learning Award, recognizing teachers who inspire students to learn and go the extra mile with students and parents after school hours.

Mr. Speaker, Jolene has inspired and gone the extra mile for two generations of students in my district and plans to continue her work as an advocate when she retires from teaching. While she is now a candidate for the National Teacher of the Year Award, she prefers to direct attention away from herself and onto the children she helps to educate. Jolene's achievement and team spirit serves as an inspiration to her students, her peers, and her community. Her tireless dedication beyond the call of duty—both in and out of the classroom—has made La Junta and all of Colorado proud. Congratulations Jolene, and good luck with your future endeavors.