

contributing to society. Sal and Myra consider their children their major accomplishments.

As busy as Sal and Myra were, they still took the time to find a way to involve the entire family in a tobacco farming business for a number of years when the children were teenagers, even venturing into an experimental curing process which was monitored by the University of Maryland. The Raspas also operated an air conditioning and refrigeration business at one time.

The Raspas have constantly demonstrated their commitment to service through their participation in other civic activities in St. Mary's County. Sal served four terms on the Democratic Central Committee and served as chair for two terms. He belongs to the Lexington Park Lions Club and received the Melvin Jones Award in 2002, which is the highest award given by Lions Club International. He was elected to the St. Mary's County Board of Education in 2002 and currently holds the position of Vice Chairman.

Myra has been active on many county and state committees including the State Department of Education Standards Setting Committee for English; the Maryland Assessment Consortium; the Gifted and Talented Task Force; Integrated Support Team; PreK-12 Intervention Task Force; Project SMART Grant Advisory Committee; MSPAP MEGA-TASK Developer; Content Coordinator for English/Language Arts/Writing MEGA-TASK, Maryland State Department of Education; and TASK-WRITER for High School Assessments, Maryland State Department.

Both Sal and Myra Raspa are still very active in St. Mary's County and continue to advocate for children. They believe in contributing for the betterment of the community. Mr. Speaker, on this day I wish Dr. and Mrs. Raspa well in their future pursuits.

HONORING THE COUNTRIES OF
THE CARIBBEAN ON THE OCCA-
SION OF THE 166TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF THEIR EMANCIPATION
FROM SLAVERY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in one accord with all the former British colonies in the Caribbean to celebrate the 166th anniversary of Emancipation Day, August 1, 1838.

In doing so, I wish to not simply recount the histories of the islands in the Caribbean, for I could hardly do justice to their diverse and compelling paths to freedom. Instead, I would like to commemorate the great day of Emancipation with a narrative of cunning, resolve, and triumph, a story that in many ways symbolizes the history of all the former British colonies which were granted freedom on that great August day.

Early in the 18th century the British brought a young lady to Jamaica's shores to work as a slave. Like the Caribbean countries themselves, her roots were African. Her name was likely a strong Ashanti one since she hailed from that great African kingdom, but upon arriving she was stripped of her given nomenclature and was known to her fellow slaves simply as "Nanny."

Slavery persisted in the Caribbean until 1834 and then in the name of "apprenticeship" until 1838, but it did not persist with "Granny Nanny of the Maroons", as she is known today. Soon after her arrival she displayed the world-renown Caribbean penchant for cutting her own path, and escaped from her master's plantation with her five brothers. Granny Nanny then traveled around the countryside organizing free Africans in the towns of St. James, St. Elizabeth, and Portland. She eventually established Nanny Town and based the community's governance on the Ashanti society.

Like the Caribbean countries, Nanny was small and wiry, but also like these countries, she was singularly focused in her pursuit of self-determination. The vast British military presence on the island launched numerous attacks on Nanny and her comrades, hoping to force them back into slavery, but for nearly two decades Nanny, the acknowledged and greatly respected leader of an army of at least 800 maroons, withstood their aggressions. She placed guards at look-out points, sent spies to live among the slaves in British plantations, and ordered her fighters to dress like trees and bushes, so that when the British entered these human "forests" they would be overwhelmed by Nanny's forces.

In 1737 the British offered Nanny a truce: the maroons would be given land and rights as free men, but only if they promised to help capture and return runaway slaves, assist the Government in putting down revolts, and cease their wars with the British. Their only other alternative would be to continue in their campaign against the massive British military, pitting 800 men against what was, at that time, the strongest army in the world.

Nanny refused their offer.

And still, these Caribbean countries refuse. Thus, I feel that the story of Granny Nanny is in many ways the story of Barbados, Nevis, Bahamas, Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Vincent, Grenada, and Saint Lucia.

For centuries, the people of these countries refused to accept British colonialism, stubbornly resisting the British from hideaways in cities, mountains, and forests. In 1838 they were finally freed from slavery's grasp, but they have not become complacent. Although confronted by pressing economic and social issues, they remain defiant, refusing to be defined by their problems and continuing to make important strides to attract investment, maintain good governance, and work for equity across all segments the population.

Today I remember Caribbean Emancipation Day by saluting Granny Nanny of the Maroons, the hero who perhaps most typifies the spirit of these great nations. It is my hope that we in the United States, with our economic policies and diplomatic relations, continue to support the efforts of these Caribbean countries as they move confidently and prosperously into the 21st Century.

HONORING THE KOREAN CHICAGO
KOREAN AMERICAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to recognize the contributions of Chicago's Korean American Chamber of Commerce toward preserving the glorious heritage and culture of Chicago's Korean community, on the occasion of its 9th Annual Korean Street Festival.

The Korean Chamber of Commerce continues to be an integral part of the Korean Community in Chicago. As a strong advocate for commercial, financial, and industrial member rights, the Chamber has played an essential role in local Korean American economic and community development. From educating members on renewing and issuing licenses, to aiding small businesses and forming cooperatives for purchasing products, its services have been indispensable to the greater Chicago area.

Among the valued contributions of the Chicago Korean American Chamber of Commerce is their joint effort with the Korean Street Festival Committee for the annual street festival. The Annual Korean Festival on August 14th and 15th will showcase the rich culture and traditions of the Chicago Korean Community, while celebrating the Centennial of Korean immigration.

Since 1996 the Korean Street Festival Committee has planned its celebration to enrich Chicago's summer season. Last year's display of arts, cuisine, music and dance performances, and variety of merchandise, brought over 40,000 local Chicago residents and travelers from around the Midwest region.

The Chicago Korean American Chamber of Commerce has consistently demonstrated its commitment to keeping the Korean heritage alive in Chicago. Their various programs and services all contribute to the success of the organization, and I applaud those who work and volunteer their time to continue this important mission. But, the Korean Street Festival is much more than good food and entertainment. It is a chance to remember and honor all of the hard work and accomplishments made by the Korean Community. It is through this awareness in which younger generations can pass on the traditions and values of Korea.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored on behalf of the Fifth District, and indeed all of Chicago, to call attention to all of the meaningful work occurring at the Chicago Korean American Chamber of Commerce at the time of its 9th Annual Korean Street Festival. I wish them a glorious festival and a thriving future in Chicago.

BILL CALLS FOR REGULATING
ACCUTANE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4598: the Accutane Safety and Risk Management Act.

In an effort to improve the health and safety of patients using a pharmaceutical product that has been linked to several major side effects, I recently joined with my friend and colleague Congressman BART STUPAK of Michigan to introduce this legislation that will establish a comprehensive patient registry for users of the drug Accutane and its generic forms.

Accutane was approved for use in treating severe acne in the early 1980s. Today, more than 1 million prescriptions are approved each year, and not always for the serious cases of acne for which the drug is intended. The Food & Drug Administration states that, "Accutane may cause depression, psychosis, and rarely, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and suicide." Additionally, the makers of the drug state that "there is an extremely high risk that a deformed infant can result if pregnancy occurs while taking Accutane in any amount, even for short periods of time."

Four years ago, Congressman STUPAK had to endure the tragic suicide of his teenage son, who was using Accutane at the time of his death.

Despite the fact that the significant and serious side effects linked to Accutane are well known, the Food and Drug Administration has yet to mandate a program to better monitor the use of this drug and to document its effects in patients. Such a registry has been recommended by FDA advisory panels on two separate occasions.

Mr. Speaker, our bill is common sense legislation that will build upon a safety plan first proposed by the makers of this drug themselves. It will still permit doctors to prescribe Accutane, but will also institute several additional patient safety and protection measures and ensure patients and their families know the full risks before beginning treatment.

H.R. 4598 will permit physicians to prescribe Accutane only for "severe, recalcitrant nodular acne" that has been unresponsive to other forms of treatment. Severe acne is the condition for which Accutane was originally approved by the FDA to treat.

For patients with severe acne, Accutane may be the only medication that can successfully treat their affliction. But in far too many cases, Accutane is prescribed in an overly cavalier manner, and patients are being placed at risk to the drug's potential side effects for no medically valid reason. Many teenagers suffer from acne, and doctors and patients need to be cautious and not treat this drug lightly.

The legislation will also register all physicians and pharmacists who prescribe and dispense the drug, and institute an education campaign to ensure these providers are well-informed about the potential risks associated with Accutane. All patients will also be educated and be required to receive similar information before starting treatment with Accutane and throughout the treatment regimen.

Prescriptions will only be written for 30 days and will not be permitted via the telephone, Internet, or mail. Female patients will also have to undergo a monthly pregnancy test before receiving a renewal on their prescription, and all patients will be required to take a monthly blood test.

The makers of the drug and all practitioners who dispense Accutane will also be required to file prompt reports with the Department of Health and Human Services anytime they learn of a negative reaction, including a death, that occurs in a patient while using Accutane.

REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN DORCAS HARDY, VA TASK FORCE ON VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Honorable Dorcas R. Hardy recently chaired the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Task Force of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Task Force issued its report in March 2004, and furnishes an excellent road map on how VA can place a stronger emphasis on long-term sustained employment for disabled veterans who are vocational rehabilitation participants. I was especially impressed with the section entitled, *More Challenges Await: A Final Word* from the Task Force Chairman, and commend it to my colleagues as an example of Ms. Hardy's wisdom and foresight:

MORE CHALLENGES AWAIT: A FINAL WORD FROM THE TASK FORCE CHAIRMAN

Addressing the benefit, rehabilitation, and employment needs of persons with disabilities—and especially veterans with service-connected disabilities continues to be difficult, and often controversial. One thing is certain: The Department of Veterans Affairs cannot afford to fail the veteran who has given so much in the service of our Nation in previous wars and now in this age of terrorism.

There is no doubt in my mind that VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program can become the best public rehabilitation program in the country, given appropriate resources and leadership. The new comprehensive, integrated 21st Century VR&E Employment-Driven Delivery System, which is proposed by the Task Force, builds on the strengths of the past and provides a continuum of service delivery, from military service to career counseling, appropriate retraining, and education, to employment or transitional independent living services with the ever-present goal of employment. The new system can provide the answer to a disabled veteran's transition to civilian society—a job.

Employment program will necessitate a major shift in attitude and approach. The current reality is that the VR&E program—despite the legislation of 1980—continues to operate as a VA education benefit for disabled veterans. It provides a larger stipend than the GI Bill program, and is accompanied by some counseling, as necessary. The new program, on the other hand, addresses the continuum of "life cycle" needs that a veteran with disabilities experiences, of which education may—or may not—be a necessary part. The focus will be the rehabilitation and employment needs of the 21st century service-connected disabled veteran.

Because the United States is at war, and will likely be in conflict situations for the foreseeable future, there must be a sense of urgency on the part of the entire Department as well as the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service to create this new 21st century service delivery system.

I respectfully suggest that no more reports or discussions are needed, just immediate and concrete actions that are supported by the Administration, the Department, and the Congress. If this vital program, with its potential for becoming the most outstanding vocational rehabilitation system within the federal government, is unable to quickly and

effectively serve the 21st Century veteran, then one must consider other options. These options include: (1) contracting the program out with clear and stringent requirements to follow the employment intent of the law, or (2) recognizing that the mandated employment focus of the program is not possible and reintegrating VR&E into the Education Service of the Veterans Benefits Administration, adding an additional stipend for disabled veterans.

Having served in various state and federal governmental positions, including Commissioner of Social Security and Assistant Secretary of Human Development Services, I have worked with numerous social services policies and programs. Cash benefit services, such as the VA Compensation and Pension Service or Social Security provide support through direct payments. These programs require development of automated claims processing methodologies. Direct and personal services are those provided by VR&E or social service agencies. Different skills, personalities, and approaches are needed for each part of the delivery system. VR&E stands as an island in the sea of the Veterans Benefits Administration, a claims processing organization. VR&E is not connected to the claims processing functions, nor do other business lines have any particular appreciation or understanding of its function. Both cash and direct benefits are needed to support the veteran. Development of a seamless, integrated delivery system is the challenge.

Many have suggested that the entire VR&E program should become a part of the Veterans Health Administration, which has more of a hands-on service delivery focus. Just as the Task Force rejected the idea of moving the VR&E Independent Living program to VHA at this time, that same thinking can be applied to moving all of VR&E to VHA. VR&E needs to address its own shortcomings first, wherever it is housed, before participating in another reorganization.

If implemented with commitment and enthusiasm, the Task Force's recommendation to rebuild the VR&E Service can be successful. Building the new service delivery system cannot be done slowly, nor sequentially. It must be driven with clear and focused timeframes; and it must be done believing that each veteran's future depends upon an effective new approach. Leadership and management will be key; timeframes that some may deem unreasonable should become standard; processes must be streamlined and supported by technology; and veterans must recognize that they, too, have an individual responsibility to complete their vocational rehabilitation plan and secure employment in a timely manner.

FUTURE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the discussions and deliberations of the Task Force, several broad policy issues were raised that were not thoroughly addressed, either because they were not directly within the scope of this Task Force's work or, in several cases, they were far more complex than our time permitted. Some issues were just too controversial at this particular point in time, but their "tipping point" will come and thoughtful policymakers and managers should be prepared to consider their breadth, shape, and impact upon VR&E. As the Veterans Benefits Administration proceeds to modernize VR&E, these longer term policy considerations, which cross the business lines of VBA, should be discussed and addressed. Each issue below will arise in the foreseeable future; each issue will have a significant consequence for the successful future of a 21st century VR&E program.