

have left a legacy that will last for years to come. On behalf of the Congress, I extend sympathies to Lynn's family, and gratitude for all she did to make our community a better place.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004, the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 2004, and the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004. These three pieces of legislation are critically needed. Our men and women in uniform exemplify the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of the American people to securing freedom and democracy throughout the world. We owe it to our Armed Forces and veterans to ensure that their benefits are protected.

The Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004 sets forth new pay provisions for physicians and dentists employed by the Veterans Health Administration that will increase their income. This bill requires, among other provisions, that base pay be uniform nationwide and that performance pay be linked to individual achievements. This bill further provides for pay that is tailored to several variables, such as geographic region, area specialty, the nature of the assignment, and individual experience.

The Veterans Benefit Improvement Act of 2004 increases the maximum housing loan guarantee amount for which veterans are eligible and also increases the voluntary contribution amount that active duty members of the Armed Forces may make in order to receive increased monthly educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill.

The Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004 allows the principal office of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be in the Washington, D.C., and metropolitan area instead of restricting it to the District of Columbia. The bill also expresses the sense of Congress that a courthouse and justice center should be provided for the Court, if feasible, by the Pentagon.

Mr. Speaker, these three bills will improve the services available to our country's armed services personnel and veterans. Those who put their life on the line to fight for the continued freedom this country enjoys should be entitled to a support system that meets their needs. These three pieces of legislation do just that. I urge my colleagues to support all three bills.

HONORING PATRICK RYAN ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as Patrick Ryan, Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, retires from government service, I rise today to pay tribute to his extraordinary career and accomplishments. After more than two decades working for the Committee, and a decade before that working for the Veterans Administration, Patrick is ending his public service career to pursue new personal and professional challenges.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first actions I took when I was elected chairman 4 years ago was to name Pat the chief counsel and staff director for the committee. Having been a member of the committee for 20 years, I was already familiar with the expertise, knowledge, judgment, compassion, and devotion that Patrick had displayed throughout his career.

A graduate of the University of Maryland, Pat went to work for the Veterans Administration in 1974 as a benefits counselor at the D.C. regional office. In this job, Pat learned firsthand about the challenges facing our Nation's veterans, especially those returning from the conflict in Vietnam. He also learned in detail about the programs and services that VA provided to help improve their lives. Among those Pat worked with at that time was a DAV benefits representative named Jesse Brown, who later became Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the 1990s.

Shortly after Pat went to work for VA, he also enrolled in the evening program at Georgetown University Law School. Over the next 4 years, he continued to work at VA, moving up to the position of budget analyst, while attending law school at night, earning his law degree in 1978. He then moved to a new position in VA's Office of General Counsel, where he worked for the next 5 years.

In 1983, Pat Ryan began working for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, serving as counsel for the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care. He later served as counsel for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, as well as for the full committee. Over the years, Pat was promoted to serve as both deputy chief counsel and finally, as chief counsel and staff director.

For the past 22 years, Pat Ryan has made tremendous contributions to many of the most important new veterans laws approved by Congress. He worked on numerous bills to expand services for aging veterans and those in need of long-term care. He was instrumental in helping to establish domiciliaries for homeless veterans and was the principal drafter of legislation to authorize VA's transitional housing guarantee program to benefit homeless veterans. Pat played a central role in helping to establish the Department of Veterans Affairs and in creating the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Pat has been deeply involved in numerous successful committee initiatives that have expanded and strengthened the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, DIC, program,

survivor health care services, and educational assistance benefits available to surviving spouses and children of servicemembers killed in action or who later die of a service-related cause. And over the past 20 years, Pat has played a role in increasing the Montgomery GI bill benefit for qualified veterans from \$300 when he joined the committee to over \$1,000 today.

Using his budget expertise, Pat has been invaluable in helping Congress ensure that VA's budget has been both appropriate and sufficient. His extensive knowledge of the law and the inner workings of VA has also greatly aided the committee in its work to provide exemplary oversight of veterans programs.

From managing the committee's professional staff, to drafting legislation, to overseeing VA's programs and services, Patrick Ryan is the consummate professional. During the four years I have served as chairman, he has helped draft and guide to enactment more than a dozen new laws to benefit veterans, including legislation to modernize the GI bill, expand veterans' health care programs, strengthen benefits for disabled veterans, and aid homeless veterans. I consider him to have been a partner in all that this committee has accomplished during our time together and it has been an honor to work side-by-side with him.

Throughout his tenure in the House, Patrick has earned and retained both the respect and the trust of Members and staff on both sides of the aisle. Pat was hired by Chairman Sonny Montgomery when the Democrats controlled the committee, and he went on to serve both the late Chairman Bob Stump and me while Republicans have controlled Congress. Pat is equally respected inside the Department of Veterans Affairs and by outside leaders of veterans service organizations.

Mr. Speaker, all of us who know Pat Ryan understand that he is driven to succeed, not for his own benefit, but to benefit his fellow man. What has made Patrick Ryan such a valuable public servant are his personal qualities of faith, hope, and charity. A leader in both his community and his church, Pat is well-known for his singing in the choir and for his love of music, especially his eclectic musical tastes.

On a personal level, Pat Ryan has lived his life in a way that has truly made a difference. He has walked to the beat of our Lord's drummer when He said "whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, you do likewise to me." For Pat, that means always looking out for the little guy. I have such respect and admiration for that character trait, and it is very strong in Patrick Ryan. What motivates Patrick first and foremost is devotion and love for his wife Kathie and their three children—Kerry, Dan, and Julia. For Pat Ryan, family comes first.

Pat is ever proud of his father who has passed, William Everest Ryan, a proud Marine who saw combat action during World War II in the South Pacific, where he was wounded and won the Purple Heart award. He later joined the Justice Department while continuing in the Marine reserves as an Officer in the JAG Corps, retiring with the rank of Colonel in 1964. After a distinguished career of government service, Pat's father retired from government service in 1977. In 1999, William Ryan died in the VA nursing home in Baltimore, 3 years after his wife, Pat's mother, Rosemary Ann Kelly Ryan, had passed away.

Pat Ryan has spent his entire career in Congress defending the same values his father defended on the battlefield and in the courtroom. These are the same values that Pat and his wife Kathie have taught their children through their words and their example.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of his colleagues in the House, members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and other Members who have known and worked with him, on behalf of veterans organizations and leaders across the country, and on behalf of millions of veterans who have benefited from his work, but have never known his name, I want to thank Patrick Ryan for a distinguished career of faithful public service. It has been an honor to work with him.

I call on all of my colleagues to join with me in honoring Patrick Ryan on his retirement and to wish him good luck and Godspeed in whatever lies ahead of him.

RECOGNITION OF CAROL WALTER

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise an extraordinary woman, Ms. Carole Walter. Ms. Walter's talent and love for culinary arts have translated into several best selling and highly regarded books, as well as accolades.

Her background goes beyond cooking. Over the years, she has established herself as a respected and highly-regarded cookbook author, baker, baking instructor, chocolatier and consultant. Ms. Walter's most recent published cookbook, *Great Cookies*, won the IACP award in the category of Best Baking. In addition, her book, *Great Pies and Tarts*, was a finalist in the Julia Child Cookbook Awards, and *Great Cakes* earned Ms. Walter a James Beard Foundation Award.

Throughout her 20-year career, Ms. Walter has exhibited incredible commitment to the culinary arts. Currently, she serves as a trustee of the New York Association of Culinary Professionals and a Certified Culinary Professional in the International Association of Culinary Professionals. In addition, she has chosen to share her enthusiasm for baking by establishing the Scholarship Fund for the NYACP. Mr. Frank Garofolo, President of NYACP has said of Carole, "(She) is a dedicated culinary professional who works tirelessly to promote the culinary arts. Her dedication to helping provide opportunities for young people to enter the profession is boundless." It comes as no surprise that Sickles Market has named Ms. Walter as the first Honoree for their 2004 Wine and Cheese Fundraiser and Apple Baking Contest.

Once again, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Walter on an accomplished career and for the instrumental role she has played in the culinary arts. She is truly deserving of the acknowledgment from Sickles Market.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD
SCAGLIOTTI

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richard Scagliotti, whose lifelong dedication to San Benito County consists of many volunteer and local government positions. Richard will be stepping down as the San Benito County Supervisor for District 1, where he has served for 16 years.

Following in the footsteps of his father, who served San Benito County in the early sixties, Richard has served nearly his entire public career on the San Benito County Council of Governments and the Local Agency Formation Commission. In addition to his work with the San Benito Board of Supervisors, Richard has served on the Veteran's Memorial Park commission, the Local Transportation Authority, the Inter-Governmental Committee and many other local government groups. One of his proudest accomplishments was the establishment of the Pajaro River Watershed Flood Control Commission in 2000, and has served on the Commission ever since.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Richard on his long and honorable career and thank him for his contribution to our society. Richard has consistently gone above and beyond the roles bestowed upon him, and has left a legacy of community leadership. I wish him all the luck in his future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING MR. KEITH
PALMER ON RECEIPT OF THE
LILLIAN C. MCGOWIN OUT-
STANDING CORPORATE CITIZEN
AWARD

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise to honor Mr. Keith Palmer, President of Palmer's Toyota Superstore in Mobile, Alabama, on the occasion of his being honored with the Lillian C. McGowin Outstanding Corporate Citizen Award.

This annual award is presented by the Alabama Gulf Coast Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The local chapter of AFP represents nearly fifty fundraisers in the Alabama Gulf Coast region and encourages the growth and development of professional fundraisers, as well as promoting the maintaining of high ethical standards in this profession.

Keith Palmer and the employees of Palmer's Toyota are certainly quite deserving of this recognition, having been extremely involved in the life of the Mobile community for many years. For many years, they have championed numerous community assistance, educational, and non profit organizations in south Alabama, all of which have been the beneficiary of his efforts and those of his fellow fundraisers. These groups include the Child Advocacy Center, the Ronald McDonald Houses of Mobile and Pensacola (Florida), the

Boy Scouts of America, Baker High School, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Semmes (Alabama) Dixie Youth Baseball, and Tanner Williams School.

The Gulf Coast AFP Chapter undoubtedly received numerous worthy nominations for men and women from throughout Mobile who in their own way also make significant contributions to their friends and neighbors on a daily basis. I am certain it is difficult to make the final selection for this award, but as in the past, this year's winner has shown a tremendous level of community support and charitable giving. Many in Mobile can personally attest to Keith's deep concern for his neighbors and for so many in Mobile who have benefited from his and his employees' tremendous generosity.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no higher praise than that received from professional colleagues, and this award is certainly strong testimony to the esteem in which Keith Palmer is held by so many in Mobile. Along with his many family, friends, and colleagues throughout south Alabama, I wish to extend to him my warmest congratulations on the receipt of the Lillian C. McGowin Outstanding Corporate Citizen Award.

THE RETIREMENT OF CHUCK SMITH

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize a very good friend of mine, Mr. Chuck Smith, a retiring member of the Orange County Board of Supervisors—and a man whose heart is dedicated to the community of Orange County.

In 1978, Mr. Smith was on the Westminster Planning Commission, and served during a time of great business expansion in Orange County. He played an instrumental role in building the Little Saigon District. Between 1984 and 1996, Mr. Smith served on the Westminster City Council and was elected Mayor for four 2-year terms.

In addition to serving the local city, Mr. Smith serves the Orange County community at large. In 1998 and in 2000, he was also elected to serve as chairman of the board of supervisors by his colleagues.

Mr. Smith recognizes the needs of the community. Loyal to public transportation efforts, he served as chairman of the Orange County Transportation Authority, and continues to represent the following agencies: The Southern California Regional Railroad Authority, and the Southern California Regional Airport Authority, dedicated to making transportation safe and reliable to all of Orange County.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chuck Smith will be missed by countless individuals whose lives he touched with his boundless enthusiasm and passion for helping others. I wish to recognize his accomplishments and contribution, and I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.